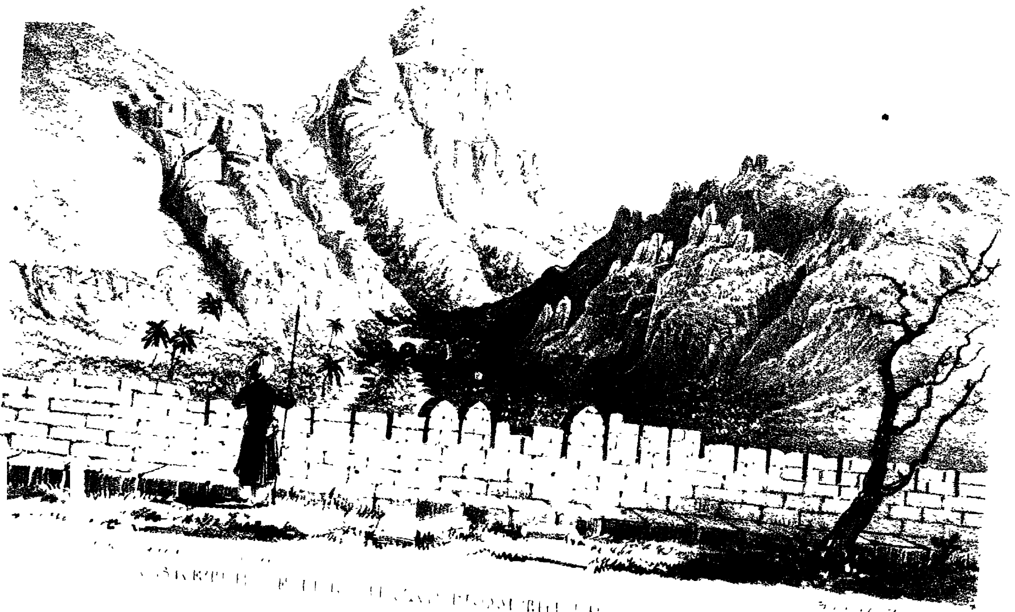
WESTERN INDIA

IN 1838.



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BY MRS. POSTANS,

AUTHOR OF "CUTCH."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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WESTERN INDIA

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CHAPTER I.

VISIT TO THE SURASHTRA* PENINSULA.

Temple of Somnâth.

"Look on its broken arch, its ruined wall,
Its chambers desolate, and portals foul."
CHILDE HAROLD.

THE learned, and elegantly minded author of "Rajasthan," has denominated the Peninsula of Guzzerat, "classic ground." Previous to the recent discoveries made in the ancient languages

* Surashtra, the most westernly side of the province of Guzzerat; the *Syrastra vicus* of Plotemy.

of the province, this term might have appeared to many, a mere fanciful application, and the result of enthusiasm, arising from gratified research into the legends and mythology of an ancient and interesting people. It is now, however, clearly demonstrated to be correct, and Surashtra, with its rich remains of Buddist worship, its temples of the sun, its sacred mounts, inscribed rocks, and phallic emblems, acquires fresh lustre from the evident connection of its fables, with the history of the western world.

My long cherished wish having been, to become acquainted with some of the sacred places belonging to the heterodox Jains,* I eagerly availed myself of the first opportunity of visiting the "holy hill" of Girnar, in the Surashtra Peninsula.

* The mounts considered sacred by the Jains, in Western India, are five in number; Girnar, Palitana, and Tallijah in Surashtra, Abu, near Deesa, and Sakur; about whose locality, exists much doubt; the Jains themselves speak of it, as far to the eastward.

In the beginning of May 1838, we embarked from Mandavie, in a Cutch Kotia, intending to make Pore-bunder, or whatever part of the Kattiwar coast, seemed most convenient for our plans. After a day's buffeting in the Gulf of Cutch, and wondering no longer at the distaste and dread, said to have been entertained by the Greek navigators for this particular part of the world of waters, our boat made the Island of Bate,* known to the ancients as Sankha-dhara, the City of Shells.† This was the first point of our Indu-classic tour, as Hindoo sacred legends assert, that from this spot, the serpent (Budda) is said to have escaped with the books of the Vedas, stolen by a celestial nymph from the lips of Brahma; by this graceful allegory of the flight of

* On the opposite shore of the Gulf of Cutch.

† The "shunk," a large shell, which after being pierced, is used as a horn, by Gosaens, all over India, is procured at Bate, and is an article of extensive commerce, even with Calcutta.

wisdom, conveying the supposed fact, that from hence learning was carried away by the Arabs and Egyptians from the shores of India, Bate having been long the great mart of commerce for other nations, both from the east and south.

Bate, is a low island of inconsiderable size, forming the extreme northernly point of the Surashtra peninsula. A small town, a pretty clump of cocoa nut palms, and two clusters of temples, decorated with red flags, is all that can be seen from the sea. The inhabitants dislike the landing of strangers; which is not always practicable however, from heavy surf, and strong currents running near shore. The sands are firm and extensive, and beyond them stretch low rocks, covered with fine coral, and great varieties of scarce and beautiful shells, offering great inducements to conchologists, and rendering very intelligible, the ancient title of Sankha-dhara.

An island to the right of Bate appears

treeless and deserted. One temple only, dedicated to Màtà, the goddess of small pox, remains; it is in charge of a few Gosaens, but receives little veneration in modern times. Opposite Bate are the cliffs .which afford the sacred chalk, so highly prized at Dwaka.* These form headlands to the peninsula; and with Bate, present a safe and calm roadstead, usually filled with boats of small burthen, waiting a favourable wind, for the prosecution of their voyages.

Early as the Greek invasion, was this spot famous as a nest of daring and reckless pirates, known as the "Sangars of Bate: men who, steeped in crime, and hardened in defiance of all human law, yet professed a purity of religious faith, and were the devoted worshippers of Budda Trivicrama, the original deity of the neighbouring Dwaka-nath.*

* Particularly used by the Gosaens, to mark the trisool, or emblem of Siva, on their bodies.

* Budda, as an incarnation of Vishnu the preserver,

The moon had risen, and shed a beautiful halo of coloured light upon the fleecy clouds, which floated round, half threatening to obscure her brightness, as our little craft anchored amongst the fleet. The shore, a low, sandy line of coast, covered with stunted milk bush, looked sadly uninviting; but to remain in a deckless boat, swarming with rats, and redolent of a mingled stench of fish and bilge water, was impossible; we determined therefore to brave its inhospitable looks, and despatching our servants in a small canoe, arrangements for a bivouac were soon concluded.

The dense jungle around us, which we found extended the distance of ten miles, to Dwaka, gave me some apprehension lest our rest should be disturbed by the

seemed a fitting object of worship to men, whose vocation was one of constant danger. This deity remained the chief object of adoration at Dwaka, until the deification of Crishna, who, as an exiled prince, built the city, and reigned there.

untimely visit of some of its inhabitants; we escaped, however, with only the shrieks and barks of a few packs of hungry jackals, who swept past our tents in search of their usual food.

In the morning, our locality looked little less desolate; and discovering neither tea-trees, nor coffee-berries, we despatched a peon to Bate, in search of some materials for a breakfast. Despite the authority of his red belt, our messenger returned empty handed; he had made five poojas to "Runchorjee,"* and for his part was in the very courts of Indra;—for ourselves, all remonstrance being useless, we could but devour our tasteless apps,† and lament the surpassing holiness of the Vishnuvies.

* The name under which Crishna is worshipped at Bate.

† Cakes made of flour and water, baked on tin plates, generally used to supply the want of bread, which is only procurable at European stations. In any place of peculiar sanctity, it is often impossible to obtain any supplies, and an egg is even denied, as containing the germ of animal life.

A strong land-wind, making it impossible to enter the roadstead of Dwaka, (which we wished to have done,) we continued our voyage along the coast, and the next day passed Mangrole,* of old famous for its manufacture of fine linen cloths.

From this spot is first seen, the distant peaks of the sacred Girnar, and the fine Junagarh hills, softened by the mists of distance, rising into and mingling with the clouds, which hang around their summits.

On one of these hills is a spot, sacred to a great Mohammedan saint, named Jemial Shah, and our crew being good Moslems, hastened to show all due respect, and availing themselves of simple and ready means, cast a few pieces of cocoa-nut towards the shore, with prayers and genuflections.

The town of Mangrole appeared small, but surrounded with clusters of foliage—fine mangoe trees flourish in the neigh-

* The "Monoglossum Emporium" of Ptolemy.

bourhood, bearing rich fruit, nearly equal, in colour and flavour, to the far-famed growth of Bombay. It is curious, that however the mangoe is cultivated elsewhere, even in a congenial soil and from Bombay plants, the produce rapidly deteriorates, becoming stringy, pale, and tasteless.

Weary of boating, the next evening we made "Verawul Puttun;" this name I afterwards discovered to be composite, including both the old and new town, the first being Puttun, the last Verawul.

Our point of interest being the old town, we were disappointed to find ourselves at Verawul, and two miles distant from the great temple of the Somnâth; the people were, however, particularly courteous and attentive, which spoke well for the friendly and hospitable disposition of his highness the Nuwaub of Junagarh, whose territories we had now entered.

The following morning we proceeded to Puttun, the great scene of Mahmoud's*

* Mahmoud of Ghizni.

intolerance. The road lies through a large Mohammedan cemetery. Beautiful cenotaphs, with domed roofs, supported on light pilasters, musjids with tall minarets and richly sculptured pulpits, wells overgrown with rich verdure, and surrounded with covered verandahs, affording at once rest and refreshment to the weary traveller, surrounded us, whilst any intermediate ground was occupied by the simple tombs of humble believers, the head of each decorated with a column, supporting the richly sculptured semblance of a Moslem turban.

At the largest well, my Hummalls called a halt, and each, with a little tobacco rolled in a fresh leaf, originated a simple but refreshing cigar.

A burning mid-day sun being yet in the ascendant, I was invited to rest in the house of the acting magistrate of Puttun, a chelah,* or favourite of the Nuwaub. The Syud Abdoola, was indeed a most

* Chelah, literally *adopted*.

splendid person, the beau ideal of an Arab dandy. His age was probably thirty; he had the finest black beard, the sweetest smile, and the largest and most lustrous black eyes imaginable. His attire consisted of a fine white muslin ankrika, confined at the waist by a scarf, edged with pale pink, entwined with rich gold and silver kincaub waistbands, whose ends depending, concealed within their folds, a richly decorated sword and dagger. A turban of fine muslin, curiously folded over a cap of gold embroidery, and a gold and pearl-set comb, put jauntily in on the left side, completed his gay and becoming costume. The minor arts of the toilette also met deserving attention, and the handsome Abdoola had not disdained to add additional softness to his full eyes, by the use of soormay, or to apply the delicate tints of the henna to his well-formed hands.

Syud Abdoola received me under the shaded gateway of his house, surrounded

by his sons ;* behind us, an open room was occupied by Arab guards, and its well-whitened walls were decorated with groups of picturesque arms, swords, shields, and matchlocks.

While enjoying the charming coolness of this retreat, the report of a matchlock resounded from the outer court; this is the usual Arab salutation, expressing at once joy, respect, and good wishes to the inmates of the dwelling. After a few seconds, a soldier entered fully accoutred, his matchlock in his hand, and a crowd of deadly weapons bound around his waist, with a band of blue and pink checked linen, the favourite scarf of the Arab soldiery. Approaching the chief, our new arrival respectfully lifted his hand to his lips, offered the same token of homage to his sons, exchanged salutations and greeting with the retainers of Abdoola, and stated his having left Girnar two days be-

* The gateway of a native house is considered the place of honour.

fore, with packets from his highness the Nuwaub.

The handsome Jemeedar accompanied us with an escort of horse, to the temple of Somnâth.* The situation of this great fane of Hindooism, is as imposing as it is itself magnificent, as a structure of other times. Crowning a bold promontory, the thundering and eternal surges lash the walls which protect it, and a wild expanse of ocean begirts the cliff on which it stands. The exterior is richly adorned with finely chiselled sculpture, on which, unfortunately, the wing of time has not flapped harmlessly, or the alternation of seasons left untouched. Those parts of the curious carvings which yet remain encrusted on the noble building, are certainly very beautiful, and the whole is a gem of exquisite, although mutilated art. The roof of the Somnâth originally supported five domes, of which two only remain; from either side of the front entrance rise

* Somnâth, Lord of the Moon.

slender columns of stone, each crowned at its tapering summit, with a pine-shaped Kullus.* In form, and proportion to the mass of the building, these columns resemble the horns of a beetle, and one of them is so much curved outwards, as to threaten a rapid descent. The interior of the temple consists of a spacious hall, the domed roof of the centre supported by an octagon of arches, rising from square and richly carved pillars. The floor is paved with a hard black stone, and strewn with fragments of the fallen domes. The entrance doorways are of the Egyptian form, narrow at the top, and gradually increasing in width towards the base. They are adorned on the exterior, by a broad, and richly ornamented border.

The sanctum, a small square room, is situated at the extreme end of the hall, immediately facing the principal entrance. It is unoccupied; and a small stone ledge

* The ornament which in Hindoo architecture forms the apex of a dome or column.

runs round the wall, about half way from the ground. From the ruins of the building, a flight of steps has been piled up on one side, which enables the visitor to command, from the roof, a beautiful and extensive view. On one side, is seen the ocean, and cliffs of Verawul, half concealed with the white foam of the angry waves ; on the other, the old Hindoo town of Puttun, girt with the graceful tombs and cenotaphs of its Moslem conquerors, reposing amongst the rich foliage of the aloe, the sita phul, and almond trees.

Such is now the great temple of the Somnâth ; scarcely a vestige remaining of the wealth and importance which, under the veil of religious zeal, tempted the cupidity of its Moslem defacer.

Lieutenant Kittoe, a gentleman of much research, connected with the antiquarian interest of India, has given an abridgment of a very amusing tale, containing the adventures of the poet Sadi, at the Temple of Somnâth. The accomplished Persian

lived two hundred years after the destroyer, Mahmud of Ghizni; and the original anecdote forms a portion of the celebrated Bostan. It commences,—

"I saw an idol of ivory at Somnâth, jewelled like the idol Munat, in the days of superstition and ignorance," &c. The story is illustrative of the state of the temple, and of manners, and may therefore be told with advantage. Sadi, wondering at the folly of live people paying their adoration to a material without sense or motion, ventures to express his sentiments to an attendant priest, with whom he has some acquaintance. The priest turns upon him in a rage, and excites a commotion, which endangers Sadi's life. Whereupon, he throws himself upon the mercy of the chief priest, stating that, although he had ventured to express a doubt, it was merely because he desired conviction. The priest tells him he is a man of sense and judgment, and shall be convinced that this idol is superior to all others, and deserving of

adoration. If he will abide in worship all night, he promises him to see the idol raise its arm in the morning in adoration. Sadi consents, and gives an amusing account of the inconvenience he experienced from the pressure of the unwashed, unsavoury crowd. Just before sunrise, the image, at the sounding of a bell, raises its arm, to the delight of the worshipping thousands. Sadi assures the chief priest of his perfect conviction, flatters him, and obtains his intimacy, till, finding an opportunity, when the temple is empty, he gets behind the image, and there discovers a servitor concealed, with the rope in his hand, for raising the idol's arm. The man runs, and Sadi follows, trips him up, and throws him into a well; then, to make quite sure, he drops heavy stones upon him, feeling that his own life would assuredly be sacrificed, if his discovery was known, and quaintly remarking, "Dead men tell no more tales." He then hurries away from Somnâth, and returns to Persia, through Hindostan, by

a route of great danger and difficulty; "the troubles of which," he says, "he shall remember to his dying day."

Such is the story; and, as Lieutenant Kittoe remarks, it shows the temple to have been restored, as a place of Hindoo worship, after its destruction by Mahmoud, and to have remained as such, with something like its former renown, for two hundred years after that conquest. It is evident, from its present appearance, that it has since yielded to other spoilers, and has been even, at one period, converted into a musjid.

The original worship of the Temple of Somnâth, was, I conclude, Buddistical. The Lord of the Moon appears to have been succeeded by a deity, known under the title of Swayam-Nath,* or the Self-

* This religion was, of old, common to Arabia and India; and there is reason for believing, what the early Mohammedan authorities assert, that Lât, worshipped by the idolaters of Mecka, was a similar

existent. On this, again, was grafted the worship of Mahadeo, or Siva. The following description, from native records, may afford some idea of the splendour which, in ancient times, surrounded the deity presiding in the temple of the Somnâth.

'The idol formed of cut stone, five cubits in height; of which three cubits were visible, and two were below the surface. The Hindus venerated the idol more than any other; the attendants washed it daily, with water brought from the Ganges; the revenue of ten thousand villages was assigned for the support of its temple; two thousand dancing women, with three hundred musicians, were ready to perform before it; many smaller images of gold and

deity to the Swayam Nath of the Hindoos.—Vide History of Guzzerat, translated by Dr. Bird.

The Pundits say, that there is nothing in the vedas, puranas, and other Brahminical text-books, to illustrate the origin and history of the Somnâth Temple.

silver in the temple surrounded this, the greatest of the gods; and three hundred barbers were in waiting to shave the devotees, who sought admittance to the holy place. Such was the popularity of this obscene worship, that the princes of Hindostan devoted their daughters to the service of the temple; and, at the occurrence of an eclipse, sometimes as many as a thousand individuals came to perform their devotions."

To subdue Puttun, was the last great object of Mahmoud of Ghizni. The poor Hindus, when attacked by the Mohammedan invaders, seem to have made desperate resistance; but the arrows of the Moslems dispersed them. Two days the siege continued; the third, the banners of Islam floated triumphant from the walls; and five thousand of the inhabitants were slain. Mahmoud, it is said, on entering the temple, observed a covered apartment, whose roof was supported by six pillars, set with jewels. Here stood the idol; the latter

was cloven in twain by the king's own hand; and from the body rolled gems, coins, ornaments, and treasure incalculable. The priests prayed and wept, but vain was the appeal; they were slain by the infuriated soldiery; and the king commanded that the fragments of the idol should be carried to Ghizni, and there cast before the great mosque, in honour of the triumph of Islam.*

Thus fell the splendid idol of Puttun; and such the intolerance which led to the wanton defacement of its beautiful temple. The solidity of its materials,† and the favourable climate of the east, have preserved some remnants of its architectural beauty;

* The destruction of the Temple of Somnâth occurred during the tenth and last expedition of Mahmoud, A. D. 1022. Heg. 413.

† As some proof of this, I may mention that, until very lately, the roof of the Somnâth was used as a battery for several large pieces of ordnance, placed there by the Nuwaub, to protect the neighbourhood of his Harbour of Puttun from pirates.

but the jewelled columns, the golden idols, the dancing girls, and the voice of melody, are replaced by heaps of unsightly rubbish; the chirp of the bat is heard from the sanctum, and the owl has found a nest amongst its richly sculptured cornices. Time, more destructive than even the sword of Mahmoud, has levelled it with all common things, and the great temple of the Self-Existent has become a sheltering place for cattle, a resting spot for the travelling goat-herd.

Leaning over the wall of the fort, which is built on the shore, and close to the temple, I was amused at seeing a tall Rajpoot leading a quiet-looking cow along the water's edge; he was armed cap-à-pie, with sword, shield, and buckler; and the contrast of his pastoral occupation, with his warlike equipment, struck me as curious. Oppression teaches the necessity for defence; and that which owes its origin to an era of danger and defiance, commonly outlives the occasion, and becomes grafted on the habits of peaceful life.

Guzzerat was long inhabited by Rajpoots and coolies, two classes of people famed for discord. Independent chieftainship fomented division, and supported despotic injustice; when the poor man, oppressed in the struggle for individual aggrandizement, found " his vineyard desolate, blasted before the dun, hot breath of war," he was fain to assert his rights, and himself become a warrior, to preserve his little property from the rude hand of the destroyer.

Some hours were delightfully passed in taking numerous drawings of the temple, and its remaining ornaments. And then came the necessity for refreshment, before proceeding on our journey of research in Puttun antiquities. The baskets produced, we asked our cicerone, the graceful Abdoola, to join us. This he declined, but showed many symptoms of curiosity, on the appearance of a bottle of Hodgson's ale. After a thousand protestations that it contained no alcohol, or aught else forbidden to a good Mohammedan, the Syud

consented to make a trial of its virtues. Abdoola raised the tumbler to his lips, and, after two sips, with a long-drawn inspiration between each, fairly emptied it at a draught, making a sufficient number of wry faces, in conclusion, and charging his sons not to touch the obnoxious beverage. Of the sincerity of his facial distortions, we had a future opportunity of judging. Mohammedans fancy all wine, of whatever growth, must be Madeira; of which scandal asserts their inordinate fondness. Abdoola denied having any in his cellar, but confessed to the possession of brandy, which he used, he said, to steep his gun caps in.*

When the heat abated, Abdoola, curvetting along upon his handsome, and gaily caparisoned Katty mare, led us through the town, along a good road, skirting the

* To account for a Mahommedan Jemeedar's possession of gun caps, I must observe, that Abdoola had received, as a present, a very excellent English gun, of *which he was not a little proud.*

shore. The ride was delightful. The fresh sea-breeze came with invigorating influence from one side, while, on the other, smiled a richly-cultivated country, studded with curious and beautiful temples; some having the massive pyramidal domes of Hindoo architecture; others, the light pilasters and graceful arches of Moslem art.

An hour's ride, brought us to a sweet, shady spot, canopied with the broad leaves of numerous sacred trees, between whose leafy coverts, glimpses might be caught of the cool waters. It was a retreat, a Hamadryad might have envied. The early Buddists of Puttun had probably anticipated us in our admiration of this quiet and secluded spot. We found near it, two caves; one almost too small to admit the most attenuated ascetic. To the other, the descent is by three low steps, which lead to a dark apartment, containing a rudely-sculptured image of Devi. The first cave, we understood, led to a succession of small chambers, each descending lower than the other.

Its darkness was impenetrable; yet I felt considerable anxiety to fathom its mysteries.

A lad, bearing a small light, floating in a saucer of oil, with difficulty entered the cave; and Abdoola, with infinite compression of his fashionable attire, followed him, with a gallant desire of satisfying my curiosity by his personal observations. On his rëappearance, gasping and half suffocated, I anxiously enquired what he had seen. "*Jehannum,*"*—was the curt, monosyllabic answer; "A name we never mention—never to ears polite." On enquiry, I found the only idol of this dark and dank receptacle, was a circle of stone, resting on what seemed intended to personify a pair of human legs. Whether this circle had, originally, any reference to the worship of the Lord of the Moon, in ancient Puttun, would be difficult to determine.

* A Hindostannee word, which expresses, in three syllables, that which, in our English tongue, is conveyed by *one*, in speaking of the infernal kingdom.

Turning from the cave-temples, we came on a valuable relic,—from its position, evidently removed from its original resting place. This was a figure of Budda, seated on a circular stone, and leaning against a low column. The face of the idol was mutilated, and the arms destroyed. The head was ornamented with flowing hair, descending in full curls on the shoulders. The gaddee, or stone, on which the figure was seated, was richly carved with beautiful female figures, sculptured in fine alto relievo. The whole, a block of evident antiquity, probably removed from the small cave-temple, to make way for the more modern idol of the polytheists.

From hence, we followed Abdoola, over many narrow and rugged paths, to a spot, regarded with peculiar reverence. Here, overshadowed by luxurious banian and peepul trees, a ghât descends to a broad and placid river, winding far away, amidst the varied tints of the rich foliage, which hang over its lovely waters. The banks, rich in grasses

of the sunniest hues, were studded with fine cattle ; and the scene was as pastoral as the far-famed grove of Vrij.* On this favoured spot, the Sun God, Heri, is said to have gathered the last lotus-flower of earthly joys, and to have sprung all radiant to the courts of Indra. The true tale, I believe, is, that this river, which is called the Rin-Nakshee, was a favourite resort of Crishna, while reigning prince of Dwaka, who, hunting here with his brother, Vali, laid himself down, weary with sport, beneath the shade of a large tree, and, covering himself with a saffron-coloured cloth, fell asleep : his brother saw him, but, mistaking his colour for that of a deer, fixed an arrow in his bow, and shot him.

Brahmins here mark with the lotus-iron, as at Dwaka; and pilgrims, from all parts of India, travel hither to worship the radiant deity, and recall bright visions of

* The birth-place of Crishna.

their god, as he sported on the fragrance-breathing shores of the Blue Yamuna.*

The river abounds with fish, sacred to Vishnu. A lad, attending on the spot, brought flour and bread, to feed them; and large numbers immediately appeared round the ghât.

Abdoola, notwithstanding the sacred character of these waters, keeps a little boat moored amongst the trees, in which he recreates himself and family; and his little slave-boys pass the noontide hours, dancing, swimming, and frisking in the cool river.

Returning through the town of Puttun, I was surprised by the number of fine almond trees flourishing so well near the sea. In every court, a magnificent specimen shades the portals of the dwelling, affording impervious shelter to the inhabi-

* Another holy spot, named Prachee, is not far distant; it is sacred to Mahadeo, and situated on the river Siriswuttee, which joins the Rin-Nackshee, near Puttun.

bitants, who lounge or sleep about the doors.

The palace of his highness, the Nuwaub, is in the centre of the town; it is a fine mansion, three stories high, with a terraced roof. The windows, or rather air holes, are of fine stone fret-work, carved in varied and elegant designs. The outer walls of the palace are decorated with niches, filled with ornamental sculpture: one, which I remarked as very beautifully finished, represented a group of sunflowers, united by a finely-wrought-chain,—the ends depending.

The walls of the town are formed of black, square, uncemented stones, about nine feet in thickness; it has thirty-six round towers, and two gates. Puttun is now completely Mohammedanized, yet bears about it abundant evidence of its origin character, as the capital of an extensive Hindoo territory. Its walls and gates are rich in the remains of Hindoo architecture; and the magnificently-chiselled

shrines of Hindooism form the bases of the finest musjids, now used by the followers of the prophet.

The successors of Mahmoud laboured strenuously to eradicate every trace of a religion and people they so fearfully detested, but in vain: the present architectural beauty of modern Puttun is but an inferior graft on its original magnificence; and the proud Moslem is content to prostrate himself before altars, once sacred to the mysterious rites of Maha-deo and Siva.

Having seen and admired all the wonders of Puttun, we took leave of the graceful and courteous Abdoola, with mutual expressions of regard and remembrance, and returned to Verawul.

We had scarcely retired, when an Arab horseman galloped up to our tents, with "Syud Abdoola Sahib's salaam, the ale had proved so extremely serviceable to his health, he should feel grateful for any we could spare."

Unfortunately, our canteeen was *en route*; but, with all sorts of good wishes, we promised an early compliance with the Jemeedar's request.

CHAPTER II.

THE SACRED MOUNT OF GIRNAR, WITH THE ROCK OF THE ANCIENT INSCRIPTIONS.

Monastic Zitza! from thy shady brow,
  Thou small, but favoured spot of holy ground,
Where'er we gaze,—around, above, below,
  What rainbow tints, what magic charms are found;
  Rock, river, forest, mountain, all abound,
And bluest skies, that harmonize the whole.

CHILDE HAROLD.

ARRIVING at the city of Junagarh,* about a week after leaving Puttun, the

* Junagarh, is a large Mohammedan town, about forty miles from Puttun, and situated at the foot of the Girnar Mount. It is the residence of his highness the Nuwaub, and capital of his territories.

cloud-clapt summit of Girnar towered above us, rich in the records of an ancient people, of fanes dedicated to the purest worship known in India, and of the "demonstrated relics of the classical period of our Indian literature."

In olden times, mounts seem to have been favourite spots for religious worship: the Jews, the Persians, and even the early Christians, selected them; and there is something just, as well as poetic, in the choice,—which, exalting man above the hum of worldly things, concentrated his thoughts, secured them from distracting influences, and fixed them upon the Deity, in whose more immediate presence he might seem to stand.

The Mount of Girnar is of granite formation, situated on an extensive plain, at an elevation of about two thousand five hundred feet above the level of the sea. The summit, a bare scarp rock, becomes richly wooded towards the base, blending with a deep ravine, clothed with forest-trees, and

intersected by rivers, swollen by the mountain torrents. From either side of the Girnar, spurs strike out into a lower range of hills, their ridges fringed with the feathery beauty of the bamboo, and their sides clothed with various jungle-plants; from which shelter, huge blocks of granite jut out, in the most rugged and fantastic forms. On a small table-land, near the summit, are the walls of a fort, enclosing the group of Jain temples, which give to this spot, its odour of peculiar sanctity.

The day succeeding our arrival at Junagarh, our party commenced the ascent of the sacred mount. Leaving the city about an hour before sunset, we soon reached a portal entering on a wide and well-built causeway, flanked on one side by huge blocks of gray granite; on the other, by a broad and deep ravine, richly wooded with tamarind and mangoe trees. Immediately before us, rose the majestic peaks of the Girnar, its temples barely distinguishable, and the whole scene closed in by side

hills, glowing with the brilliant rays of a departing sun.

About fifty yards from the entrance of the causeway, surrounded by huge blocks of the same material, stands a granite rock, bearing somewhat the form of a flattened cone, about twenty feet in height, and seventy in circumference. It is distinguished from those near it, by the surface being graven with numerous deep but small characters, divided by longitudinal lines. Towards the base of the eastern side, it is slightly defaced, the effect of blasting, the neighbouring rocks having been used to form the pavement of the causeway. Insignificant as this block of granite might appear, if considered simply as a feature in the bold scenery around, it nevertheless formed the great object of our pilgrimage, as the celebrated rock of the ancient inscriptions, and the great monument of Buddism, in the Surashtra peninsula.

To us, its small, but mystic characters,

were indued with absorbing interest; at a distance of many hundred miles, we had read, and pondered on their wondrous history, and it was with no common feeling of satisfied curiosity, that we saw them before us, chiselled in the living rock, with their quaint, and Egyptian-looking forms.

To awaken any degree of sympathy with this interest, I must entreat the reader to pause with me on the causeway, while I endeavour to explain the history and objects of the graven rock.

The hill of Girnar is known as one of the five mounts sacred to the Jain sect, its dagobs, eaves, and ancient temples, incline to the belief, of its owing its origin to the early ages of Buddism, and confirmation of this opinion, seems lately to have been afforded, by the discovery of the history attached to the graven tablets of the Girnar rock.

The history of religious sectarianism in India proves, that the followers of Budda were grievously persecuted by the Brah-

mins, and that the Hindoo princes inflicted on them every description of merciless torture, regarding them as infidels, and their religion as an unpardonable heresy.

About the year 546 B. C., arose a reformer, in the person of the virtuous ascetic Sakia, who endeavoured to found regulations and laws among the Buddists, which should exalt the character of their magistrates and pontiffs, and render them somewhat independent of oppression; in 319, B. C. a celebrated king called Asoka, reigned at Palibothra,* and became a convert to the tenets of Buddism. This prince, who after his consecration was styled Piyadasi, was inspired with the strongest zeal for proselytism, and in furtherance of his designs, allowed convocations to be held, missionaries to be entertained, and every method adopted which could tend to render general, those opinions which the king now considered to form the only true faith.

* Considered as the modern Patna.

Piyadasi appears also to have desired to gain over to his measures, not only his great ally, Antiochus, the Syrian, but also the Macedonian prince, Antigonos, and one of the Ptolemies of Egypt.* Still unsatisfied with these general means of grafting new opinions upon the prejudices of the people, and of introducing Buddism by means of missionaries and commerce, into the empires of the east, the royal convert, caused to be disseminated, by means not liable to decay, the tenets he had himself so lately learned to venerate. On the rocks of Girnar, and of Dhauli in Cuttack, on the pillars, or láts, of Delhi and Allahabad, the king caused to be graven, edicts containing the leading maxims of Buddism, and thus published them to the people, in the vernacular idiom, and in the most opposite parts of his great empire of India. The edicts appear to have been in substance duplicates, but bearing various dates subsequent to the consecration of Asoka.

* Ptolemy Philadelphus.

The great object of the king appears to have been general conversion; of his people first, and of all the nations with whom he had communication or alliance. A knowledge of the high moral tone, and metaphysical subtilties of Buddism, leads to the conclusion, that Asoka must have been richly endowed by nature with a mind capable of appreciating a faith so far purer than the Brahminical, yet one he had doubtless been instructed to despise. When Alexander the Great arrived on the banks of the classic Indus, Buddism was in its most flourishig condition in Western India; its pontiffs were protected, its tenets published by missionaries both abroad and at home, and the wealthy, and the great, interested in its support. It is difficult to learn, how its great enemies, the Brahmins, gradually undermined its influence, and regained their sway; but as years passed on, the power of Buddism dwindled, its holy places were forsaken, the images of the Jains were set upon the ancient altars

of "the supreme intelligence," (so the monotheistic Buddists termed their deity) and the remnant of believers in this pure and moral creed, became again oppressed with external opposition, and torn by internal schism, until their existence became lost in the fluctuation of opinion, and their power superseded by the growing strength of the two great sects of Western India, the Jains, and the Vishnuvies.

Such is a brief sketch of the circumstances which led to the engraving of the Girnar rock, by the command of king Asoka; for bringing the history of which to light, and decyphering its ancient characters, the learned and literary community, is indebted to James Prinsep, Esq., of Calcutta, who has lately made the ancient character and language of Surashtra, the object of his most arduous labours.

The Girnar rock bears three inscriptions. The most ancient, which occupies the eastern side, are the edicts of King Asoka. These celebrated edicts are very perfect,

and are divided by longitudinal lines. Of the other inscriptions, one occupies the western, the other, the northern face of the rock; the former, except where a large portion of the stone is broken away, are also perfect. The characters of these last, differ from those which contain the edicts of Asoka, and are of a more modern date. They refer to the original building of a bridge on the way to Girnar, commenced, as it appears, in the time of Chandra-Gupta, (Sandra-Cottus) the grandfather of Asoka, and repaired, and completed at various subsequent periods.

These inscriptions are all graven in the Sanskrit language, but the character has become obsolete; by recent researches, it has been ascertained, that such was the written Sanskrit in the time of king Asoka, but in the course of two thousand years, its character has undergone no fewer than nine distinct alterations and modifications, until known as the modern Devi-Nagari.

The edicts of Asoka, are fourteen in

number, and include mention of the great king's allies, Ptolemy, Antigonus, and Antiochus. To trace the name of a Hindoo sovereign, united with that of a Greek prince of Syria, is sufficiently startling; but it becomes even more curious, when we note the expansive benevolence of Asoka, seeking to apostolize Egypt, and to introduce the religion of Budda to the land of the Ptolemies, transplanting it from the glowing land of India, to the fertile banks of the Nile.

These remarkable edicts, caused by the the royal convert to be graven on the rock by the way side, that all who passed up to the sacred mount, might be instructed in religious wisdom, contain the enforcement of the great Buddistical virtues,—honor to parents, charity to kindred, humanity to animals, temperance and sobriety in living, with commands to obliterate religious controversy, to provide a system of medical aid, suited to men and animals, to keep the tongue from

evil speaking, and to support missionaries, who might spread abroad among the people these truths, and according to the words of the edict, "release them from the fetters of sin, and bring them unto the salvation which passeth understanding."

Such was the spirit of the great *Dharma*, or law, promulgated by Piyadasi to his loving subjects. The poorest and most unlearned amongst them could not plead ignorance of its precepts, for they were stored, not in the archives of temples, nor in the colleges of the Buddists, neither in the tomes of learned pundits, but were graven on a rock by the way side, to bless the humblest pilgrim with their wisdom.

Twenty-one centuries have elapsed since these pure maxims of ethics first enriched the sacred mount, concealed by the mystifying changes of language and religion in the Surashtra, and the characters on the Girnar rock, remained long a source of wonder to the people, and a puzzle to the

deepest researches into Hindoo classic lore.

It was reserved for the present era of antiquarian learning, to crown all past investigations, with the triumph of arranging an alphabet, by whose means the ancient characters might be rendered intelligible, and form the data so much desiderated to correct the wildness of Hindoo chronologists. The edicts of Piyadasi, so lately discovered in an obscure spot of Western India, now connect the legends of the east with the histories of the western world, and throw light upon the most interesting historical, religious, and philological discussions of modern times.

Generation after generation has passed away; the power of Buddism has faded before the increasing strength of the heterodox Jains; the original Sanskrit, as the written language of Girnar, has been superseded by the modern Pali; the Egyptian and Greek dynasties are unknown to the present annals of Surashtra

history; yet, despite the great power of change, the rock of the sacred edicts, stands fresh as from the chisel of the graver. By the indefatigable zeal of a single individual, it has poured forth its hidden springs of wisdom; and I doubt not, but that the same learning, which discovered a key to the mystery which baffled the genius of a Jones, a Wilford, and a Tod, will perfect the work, and throw a halo of classic interest around the rude block of the Girnar causeway, such as the most enthusiastic orientalists have not dared even to anticipate.*

To the Jain pilgrims of the sacred mount, the rock of edification is no longer a sealed page in their country's wisdom; the words of the "heaven-beloved king" plead to them, as to their ancestors, in a strain of mercy and benevolence,

† I refer to James Prinsep, Esq., whose learned and very interesting disquisitions on the rock edicts of Girnar, appear in the 75th, and following numbers of the "Bengal Asiatic Society's Journal."

On Stone by W. H. [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

which neither the Israelite or the Christian can condemn.*

The transcript and translation of these remarkable characters, open a wide field for enquiry and gratification to all who are interested in Indian classics. The most unlearned traveller, once acquainted with its history and objects, could not pass this simple rock, on his way to the Jain temples of Girnar, without laying up, if not a store for speculation, at least a deep, and heart-stirring moral.

Waving historical association, to me the old stone presented peculiar attractions; some of our party being engaged in taking the necessary and much required fac-similes, after the approved method of Monsieur Jaquet of Paris.

The extreme heat of the season, rendered it necessary to erect a gay particolored awning, over the summit of the rock; and small ladders were placed against

* "Thus spake the Heaven-beloved King," is the usual exordium to the edicts of Piyadasi.

its sides, for the convenience of transcribers. The people of Junagarh, attracted by the preparation, came in curious groups, to watch the progress of the work. With some pigment left on a previous occasion, the native workmen had daubed a resemblance to Huniman, on an opposite rock, and set up little flags, in honor of their favorite, the monkey God. I suspect to many, this little distorted image of red ochre, was an object of more real veneration than the black and time-stained rock of King Asoka's edicts.

After satisfying the curiosity of a few enquirers, we continued to travel onwards upon the causeway, which is itself a very splendid work, carried into execution by a rich merchant of the *Soonderjee* family, a name well known in Guzzerat.

The way led through a luxuriant jungle of teemree, jambu,* corenda, wild fig, ficus

* From the jambu is extracted a very fine plum-coloured dye, much used in the province; both the jambu and the Teemree bear a pleasant sub-acid fruit.

religiosa, and mangoe trees. Bees seemed abundant; and after the rains, large quantities of fine honey are procured for consumption in the jungles of Junagarh. Numerous monkeys, for which Guzzerat is famous, were merrily frisking about the woods, skipping from tree to tree, and peeping slily at us between the branches, as if triumphing in their bright and leafy homes.

The steep and rugged ascent, soon compelled us to dismount, and quit our horses for a more safe means of travelling. This we found in little vehicles, called doleys, which consist of a small square seat, suspended by side ropes to a pair of short poles borne on the shoulders of four bearers. This appeared but a crazy and comfortless conveyance; but the steepness of the path, its extreme narrowness, the sharp turnings of the road, the huge blocks of granite lying across it, and the precipices on either side, readily convinced us, that an ascent by any other means, would have been impracticable.

Once past the lower range of hills, our bearers paused to rest at a small Dhurrum Saulah, erected on a shoulder of the first ascent. Long as our way had seemed, the summit of Girnar still towered above us, a perpendicular scarp, appearing to oppose our further progress. The early pilgrims, must indeed have found it a toilsome thing to scale the rugged heights of the sacred mount; but in later times, religious zeal has provided a succession of steps, guarded by a low parapet wall, which, winding round the angles of the rock, permit a safe, and comparatively easy ascent:* with the assurance of these means being sufficient protection from any actual danger, the journey is very trying to the nerves, the dooly bearers being sorely pressed for room

* The expence of forming these steps was enormous; for a third only of the whole distance, 12,000 rupees was expended on materials and labour. The distance traversed from the commencement of the ascent to the summit of Girnar, is two miles, five furlongs, and seventy-one yards.

in which to turn their little crazy expedient, where, at the angles of the road, the parapet wall, scarce a foot in height, crowns steep precipices, which descend in fearful suddenness to the wooded depths of the ravine.

The rich natives always adopt the use of a dooly ; and one often meets a set of bearers, groaning under the weight of a fat Banian, who sits cross-legged in wealthy indolence, while the poorer pilgrims trudge onwards, with only the assistance of a slight bamboo, and, not unfrequently, encumbered with the charge of an infant, while the emaciated mother toils after them, laden with the water gourd, or a few sticks. For the refreshment of these poor folks, charitable Gosaens daily place jars of water on convenient spots, as a work of considerable merit, appreciated by the temple deities.

The fleecy clouds, and heavy mists of evening, had enveloped the summits of Girnar as we entered the fort, and the

night-dew descending heavily upon our garments, constrained us to take shelter in a verandah, commonly used by strangers, as a durrum saulah, there being no level spot on the mount, of sufficient extent to allow the pitching of tents.

Early on the following morning, the whole range of scene, above and below us, was enveloped in clouds. The valley we had passed the preceding evening, and thought so sunny and so bright, lay below us, like a sea of thick-ribbed ice, and beautiful were the effects of varied light, as the mists, whirled rapidly along by the morning breeze, and becoming more and more transparent, as the newly-risen sun shed his warm beams upon them, revealed, at intervals, the richly-wooded knolls of the surrounding hills, and the bluffs of cold gray granite, as the bright rays divided into masses the fleecy clouds, and the breeze rolled them rapidly past.

Beautiful as was the view of the natural features of Girnar, from the bastions, the

interior of the fort possessed greater attractions; and I turned with eagerness to the magnificent temples grouped around, once the great fanes of the purest religion ever known in Western India, and now, the monumental records of the growth of a heterodox faith, and the incalculable wealth of Surashtra Banians.*

The fort contains seven temples, belonging to the Shrawuk Jains, who seem to have succeeded the Buddists, in the possession of Girnar. The temples are in the care of Bháts,† and only one priest or *Goorjee*, was at this time present. This man, whose manners savoured much of self-esteem, came, actuated perhaps more by curiosity than courtesy, to see us, and

* The temples of Girnar were doubtless of Buddist origin. The word Budda, signifies universal holiness; and his disciples seem to have been untinctured by idol worship, until the apotheosis of Crishna, about 1200 B. C.

† Bháts, the bards, and great repositories of legendary lore.

consented to our examination of the temples, if we would enter them without our shoes. Having agreed to this point of etiquette, the Goorjee proceeded to act as cicerone; he wore full white linen raiment, and carried the usual brush and water vessel in his hand; but his head was unshaven, neither did he wear the linen screen before his lips, which I had observed with the priests of the rival sect.

The Jains are divided into the Shrawuks, and the Lunkas; the Shrawuks worship the images of the twenty-four deified saints, called Trithacars; the Lunkas abhor idols, and are more strict than the Shrawuks, in their laws against the destruction of animal life. Their Doondees, or priests, are the filthiest people imaginable, never either washing or changing their garments, until become rotten or unserviceable from continued use. It is remarkable, that these sects intermarry; the wife, it is said, becoming speedily converted to the opinions of her husband.

The first temple we entered, and the principal resort of pilgrims and devotees, is dedicated to Neemnathjee, who ranks as the twenty-second of the Jain Trithacars. It is built in the usual style of Hindoo architecture, and occupies the centre of a large court, surrounded by closed galleries. These galleries contain a great number of white marble images, of Parswanath, the twenty-fourth Trithacar; they are about two feet high, finely polished, and ranged in niches on a slab, which runs along one side of the gallery. The other is richly carved, with open fretwork, which admits light and air, into the building. The Gaddee on which each image is seated, bears the recorded name of the Banian donor, with the date of its presentation; over the head of each, projects a hood of the cobra capel, the emblem of Parswanath's power.*

Little domes on the roofs of these gal-

* The Trithacars have each their wahun, or emblem, as Parswanath the cobra, Neemnath, a shunk or shell, Rikhubdeo, a Nandi, and so on.

leries, mark the position and number of the images, a dome being built over every niche.

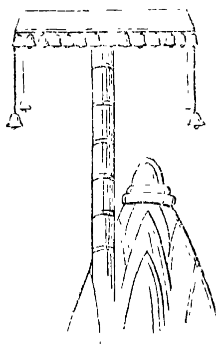
The temple itself is built solely of granite, and contains four apartments; the centre one, has a large domed roof, richly and curiously painted, and surrounded by sixteen female figures, each supported by crouching caryatides, which form the cornice. The figures are attired in a cholah or boddice, and trowsers; the raiment colored, the necklaces, ear-rings, anklets, &c. richly gilt. The dome is supported by triple marble pillars; the floor below it, being formed of finely tesselated, brown and white marbles. The sanctum, contains a large black image of Neemnathjee, seated on a rich gaddee, and holding between his feet a small golden image; the forehead and breast of the saint, are ornamented with gold, and the head covered with bright silver bosses; below the gaddee, are some sculptures of charging elephants, wrought in black

marble; and on the floor of the sanctum, the symbol of Vishnu, inlaid in yellow marble, surrounded by a mosaic border. Over the head of the image, is stretched a large square of rich purple satin, bordered with gold, and inscribed with golden letters in the Sanskrit character, an encomium, I understood, on the virtues of the saint; from the ceiling are suspended two large bells, and a lamp containing sacred oil; the doors are of black stone, richly carved, bound and bossed with brass.

Without the sanctum, but facing the idol, stands a painted elephant, with a howdah and trappings, manufactured at Surat, and placed here for Neemnath's especial service.

The third apartment of the temple, contains two octagonal blocks of marble, surmounted with square slabs of granite, divided into small compartments, each containing the carved resemblance of a miniature pair of human feet; steps of

proportionate size, are cut on the sides of these blocks, and at their base, miniature baths.* These 1452 feet, are said to represent those of all the distinguished disciples of the Jain Trithacars. From the dome of the temple, on the exterior, rises a tall pole, gaily painted, and supporting a platform, hung with little brass bells; small tongues of iron being so placed, that the slightest breeze causes a



* The forms of these blocks reminded me at once of the Jewish altars, drawings of which appear in Calmet's Dictionary of the Bible.

merry jingle. This is called a *ghunt*, and adorns most of the temples within the fort.

The temples all contain curious and exquisite sculpture. The columns are peculiarly beautiful, from the fineness of their proportions, which gives them a lightness and elegance of effect, I have never seen surpassed, even by the finest specimens of Grecian art. The same remark may be made of the figures, which prove a correct knowledge of the rules of art, and of the characteristic graces of the male and female figure, which awakens the highest admiration. Many of the designs are singularly ingenious, and as varied as they are curious. A circular compartment in the roof of one temple, appeared to be peculiarly remarkable, and well deserving notice. The centre represented a small head, wearing a cap or coronet, resembling those seen in the drawings of Henry the eighth, and from this radiated five distinct, and exquisitely

formed figures in graceful attitudes, adorned with anklets, girdles, and flowing scarfs.



On many of the cornices, are exquisite sculptures of infinite variety; some representing processions of women, as if in attendance on a sacrificial ceremony; amongst the groups, cars drawn by bulls appear, and warriors on prancing steeds, surrounded by dancers and musicians.

One curious group, represents a Trithacar, seated in the usual position, with a pair of wings projecting from the head. At the side of this figure are musicians, with cymbals, horns, and other instruments.

Behind the sanctum of Neemnath, I discovered a cloister, closed with much secresy; being alone in the temple, I one day persuaded a Bhát to allow me to enter, by submitting to the usual etiquette of bare-foot enquiry.

I found this place filled with numerous images of Parswanath, some simply seated on Gaddees, others enshrined in miniature temples of fine white marble, and one or two large blocks, sculptured with small images of the whole twenty-four Trichatars.

Having casually heard of the existence of a cave, near, or in, the temple of Neemnath, I made enquiries on the subject, but the Bháts stoutly denied the alleged fact; however, having obtained a clue to its position, we despatched one of our people

in search of it; succeeding in finding the place, he reported it to be a small excavation, leading from an enclosed gallery, and containing a very old image of Parswanath. The peculiar sanctity of the holy person, consisting, in the asserted fact of his "being always in a perspiration;" we could not hear any other reason for the reverence shown to this particular image, or for the evident dread of the Bháts, lest it should be polluted by our presence.

Without the large temple of the Neemnath, are the beautiful columns of an unroofed sacred building; and the eye travelling between them, rests upon one of the most remarkable features of this magnificent scene. From a perpendicular scarp which rises from the plain to the very summit of Girnar, juts a single block of granite, slightly inclining towards the precipice. As the *Bhiru Jhup*,* or "leap of death,' this is the chosen spot, from which zealous devotees cast themselves, in the assured

* Bhiru, the son of time.

hope of the doctrine of transmigration, that they will enter their next state of being, in the enviable rank of powerful Rajahs.

The ascent to this fatal point, is made from the back of the rock; but its steepness renders it apparently inaccessible. The poor devotee, however, determined upon self-destruction, climbs from point to point of the slippery granite, grasping every irregularity to assist his progress, when, having gained the summit, he places a cocoa-nut (unstable support), with mantras,* upon the rock, and standing on it for an instant, with outstretched arms, leaps joyfully to his doom. But a few days before our arrival, a devotee had cast himself from this spot, into the ravine, where his body was found, nearly devoured by eagles and beasts of prey.

Fearful is the height and position of the Jhup, considered as a spot marked for self-sacrifice. But magnificent is its fine and clearly-distinguished outline, as it appears

* Prayers.

in bold relief against a calm blue sky, or is crowned with a lurid and glowing thunder-cloud, when the torrents rush down from the mountains, and the roar of falling waters mixes with the wild scream of the soaring eagles. As if to contrast with the rugged and defined outline of the "leap," two small and fairy-like temples crown the height immediately behind, surmounted with gaily-streaming flags. Below it is a well, celebrated for the purity of the water, called the Hasti Pat, or Elephant's Foot. This name is derived from an octagonal stone in the centre, bearing some faint resemblance to this substantial member. A few plantain trees are planted near it, and flourish well amidst the blocks of granite.

To describe, in detail, the beauties of the great temples of Girnar, would be tedious, as they vary little. All contain colossal images of a saint, and the galleries are filled with marble idols, as I have described. When any of these images, or *muruts*, as they are called, become defaced, they are no longer worshipped.

Girnar has not escaped the devastating effects of Mohammedan intolerance. The solidity of the materials of which the old Buddist temples are built, tended much to their preservation; but the Bháts assured us, much injury had been committed by Allab-deen Khonee, or the Bloody, a Moslem prince of Delhi.

The whole of the Banian population of Surashtra are employing their wealth in repairing the temples; but it says much for the decrease of native art, that sandstone is the material used, as the masons possess no tools of sufficient temper to cut the granite. From a reference to the books of the Chargé-d'affaires of the Shrawuk Banians, it appears, fifty rupees is the usual sum paid for a small image, and that two thousand five hundred rupees are expended yearly in ghee, sandal wood, flowers, &c. for the lights and offerings of the temple.

The well-chunamed walls of the verandah, which formed our abode, was scrawled over, in European taste, with native names

and sketches, with here and there an attempt at caricature. As, in an idle hour, I looked over these evidences of unoccupied vanity, my eye caught some pencil scribbling in the English character, and, with considerable difficulty, I decyphered the following, which I thought too beautiful to be easily forgotten.

" This mountain, tow'ring midst the clouds on high,
Now crowned with many gods of vanities,
And lies, that neither know, nor hear, nor help,
Their ardent devotees, who prostrate fall,
And praises loud recite within their shrines,
Shall be a ' hill of holiness' to him
Whose potent hand doth weigh it in the scale,
And less than nought its gravity esteem.
Its statues, hewn as the strange device
Of those, with darkened eye, and erring heart,
Who view the soul of man, not as the work,
But essence, of the Deity Supreme,
Shall doubtless be destroyed, or seen by all
As monuments of folly and of sin.
The saint devout its airy heights shall tread,
And upward cast his eyes to God the Lord,
Who framed and peopled the wide firmament,
And numbereth all its worlds, with their vast hosts.

His honour he will celebrate, in lays
Indited by the word of inspiration sure;
The valleys shall rëecho to his voice,
And from the western sea to Cambay's strand,
The song of Christ shall rise, who hath received
The heathen, as his heritage beloved,
And over them shall reign, while sun endures.
I hail that day: O, may it soon appear!
Haste, Lord, thy work, and shed abroad thy fear."*

After passing two days in admiring the exquisite beauty of the Jain temples, I commenced, by means of a little dooly, the farther ascent of Girnar. From the fort to the summit of the mount, every half mile bears testimony to its sacred character. Inscriptions abound, both upon the rocks themselves, and on the sides, and doorways of the older temples. Little rude figures of Budda are chiselled upon the blocks of granite, at almost every angle; and small, upright stones, on which

* These lines, I found afterwards, had been written by Dr. Wilson, and published in the Oriental Christian Spectator, for 1835.

are sculptured a male and female figure, point the road to the several water springs, while the head of the sacred bull presides over the fount itself.

The steps, we found, continued over the various irregularities of the hill; and halts, to relieve the bearers, were made at the several beautiful temples, which crown the level spots. An agreeable appearance of freshness and verdure is given to the mount, by immense numbers of corinda bushes, whose subacid fruit is a welcome relief to the wayworn devotee. Two peaks form the summits of Girnar. On the first, we found a small temple erected over a pair of gigantic feet, in commemoration of an ascent having been made from hence, by one of the Trithacars.

About one hundred and fifty yards from this point, rises the Guru Dattara, the highest peak of the Girnar. A succession of blocks of granite, rising one above the other, are crowned by a small white temple, decorated with flags. A fearful depth

intervenes between the first peak, and the Guru Dattara, which shoots up, all bare and rugged, into the glowing sky.

The magnificent view from this point at sunrise, well repays the fatigue of the ascent. The rich vale below, its brilliant hues, mellowed and mingled, is now hidden, and now revealed, by the misty shrouds suspended midway between the towering peak and the plain from which it rises. Bright and iris-coloured rays, gild the blocks of cold gray granite, and stream in rich luxuriance upon the glades below. Here, the early sun-light smiles upon the side of a wooded knoll, and there, rests on the sculptured angle of a time-worn temple, and then, escaping from the shade of an intercepting rock, pours its rich, full radiance upon all around, and reveals the surpassing beauty of this lovely scene.

Its influence on the mind is probably increased by the deep, still silence; removed so far above the hum of common life, scarce " a floating whisper o'er the

hill" breaks in upon that contemplative mood, which mountain scenery usually engenders, and the imaginative mind may freely indulge its purest aspirations, while gazing on a design of nature, wrought in one of her sublimest moods.

A Gosaen inhabits the temple, at the summit of the Guru Dattara; but, notwithstanding the steps are continued, the ascent was considered too dangerous to be attempted by our party, who were more particularly disinclined, by a knowledge of the fact, that only five days before, the body of a pilgrim was seen, who had fallen in an attempt to gain the temple. A little grain was found, tied in a cloth, about his waist, the only store for his long journey; his body was sadly macerated, and too much decayed for removal. The Gosaen said, he was alone, when ascending the peak, and fell from near the summit. Notwithstanding the danger of the ascent, and its fatal results, pilgrims may be seen, crowding the way towards the Guru Dat-

tara, from all parts of the Peninsula of India. A small tablet, let into the side of the temple. records that the steps were the work of a wealthy Banian, from the town of Boondee, in Rajpootana.

Below the first peak, is a valley, rich in wild mangoe-trees. Amongst their leafy coverts, rises a temple sacred to Huniman; and the attendant Gosaen feeds flocks of monkeys, who, morning and evening, with all the appetite of mountaineers, literally cover the dome of the temple. Charity, however, is not confined to the monkey tribe of Girnar; near the temple of Neemnath, is a Sadowut,* or store, from which pilgrims receive a gratuity of half a pound of parched grain each. A Surashtra Banian subscribes three hundred rupees annually to this benevolent object. Many of the poor devotees, who visit Girnar, depend upon this, as their only sustenance, combined with wild figs, and a berry, of pun-

* The word Sadowut, literally means, universal charity.

gent quality, which grows on the wild peepul tree. The natives sometimes complain of this berry producing headache; and the corinda is usually eaten with it, as a corrective.

The Girnar is the resort of numerous ascetics, who, resigning the world, pass years in its still solitudes. Hearing, in one of my walks, the shrill sound of a Shunk,* I looked long on the scene around me, ere I could observe the player. At length, my eye caught a naked ascetic, perched upon a projecting rock, immediately in front of a small cave, hewn in the granite scarp. His name, he told me, was Ramdasjee: he had lately travelled alone, to Girnar, from Juggernath, in Orissa; he intended to remain on the sacred mount during the monsoon, and should then travel onwards, he knew not where, but "wherever it pleased God." I

* Shunk is a shell, which, being bored, produces a wild note, resembling that of a horn. Always used by Gosaens.

enquired whether he had no personal wishes connected with the matter, and he said, none; his wishes were, to act in accordance with the commands of God. This poor creature, offered a very enviable instance of resignation and contentment. A few roots, piled in a corner of the cave, sufficed for his provision; a lotah, for water, and a little firewood, gathered in the jungle, comprised his property; and when he, at any time, received trifling alms, he himself contributed to the Sadowut of the fort.

Another ascetic resides near the Bhiru Jhup, with a brother hermit, lately arrived from Dwakanath. The forehead of this man is marked with the trisool of Siva, in the sacred chalk of Bate. His long black hair is plaited curiously with Tulsi beads, and his arms bear marks of the sacred lotus, bestowed by Surashtra brahmins. All this religious array causes him to be regarded as an individual of especial sanctity, and having acquired a little sum by beg-

ging, he had laid his property out in flour, and established a minor sadowut for the benefit of his poorer brethreu. This man is a Gooroo,* or teacher of his sect, and during my visit to him, a Chelah came to make his offerings. Setting a few grains of rice upon the threshold of the temple, he blew a large shunk, made pooja to his Gooroo, and departed with a blessing.

Returning one evening, at a late hour, from the smaller temples on the mount, I encountered a young Gosaen, setting out for mount Aboo.† His body was smeared with ashes, his hair matted with clay, a linen rag girt about his waist, and over it a thick black rope, from which depended a brass bell, to a considerable length; he carried, as the only provision for his arduous journey, a gourd of water, and a little bang. Imagining that the object of the

* The Gosaens are divided into two great classes, the Gooroos, or teachers, and their Chelahs, or disciples.

† Sacred to the Jains, and situated near Deesa.

suspended bell, must be to scare wild animals from his path, while passing through dense jungles, he corrected me by saying, he cared for neither man nor beast; should it be his fate to meet the latter, the goddess Mátá, who watched over him, would either conceal him, or metamorphose him into a similar beast to that he encountered, which would secure him from injury. This poor enthusiast had already travelled from the Deckan, and was about to wander through dense jungles, and trackless wastes, to visit the sacred mount.

The miseries this class of devotees undergo, is often terrible. Exposed to cold, to miasma, to the attacks of beasts of prey, to disease, in all the forms common to a tropic clime, friendless and alone, many doubtless die, in their search for religious fame. That all are hypocrites is improbable; many, on the contrary, perhaps, are warm enthusiasts, and the strength of their superstition, united with a desire for the distinction, which is originated by a repu-

tation for unusual sanctity, may shield their minds from the apprehension of danger, and afford a sufficient motive for the endurance of every hardship.

In addition to these religious classes, the Junagarh hills afford protection to a wild tribe of Kolies, and to a description of outlaws, called Bharwatteeahs;* in former times, these men were powerful and numerous, much feared by the peasantry, upon whose villages they made forays for the purposes of plunder. It is said, that some years since, a chief of this tribe became enamoured of the daughter of a Nuwaub of Junagarh, and on her being doomed to perform Suttee, on her husband's death, rescued her from the flames, and carried her in triumph to the fastnesses of the sacred mount. A few of these robbers are now occasionally encountered; and at night, when the clouds gather round the hills, the gleam of a little

* Literally, from Bhar-out-wat; a way.

fire on the mountain-side, may tell of their where-about.

The people of the neighbourhood, with all the superstition common to those who dwell surrounded by mountain-fastnesses, state, that the unfrequented passes of the hills are inhabited by cannibals, whom, curiously enough, they entitle *Ogres.* I could not discover, how the belief, or the word, had originated.

Caves of natural formation, abound on the Girnar, which would suggest its fitness as a place of refuge and protection for the lawless tribes of a country so long oppressed by divided rule, and imperfect government, as the province of Guzzerat. Some excavations are attached also to the temples, and considered peculiarly sacred. A cave at a little distance from the fort, contains a female figure, clad in gay, particoloured marble raiment, who represents the intended wife of the great saint Neemnathjee. The story goes, that the saint, greatly desiring the society of a helpmate,

fixed his choice upon the daughter of a Hindoo Rajah of Junagarh, distinguished for her wisdom and beauty. Being bidden to the wedding, he found crowds of relatives assembled to honour the occasion, and hecatombs of bulls and sheep provided for feasting and sacrifice. Enquiring whether these preparations were considered necessary, and being assured that they were so, the prejudices of the holy Jain were aroused, and his benevolence sorely wounded; the struggle was great, but at length, he stated his determination to resign the princess, rather than incur the loss of so many lives, and so much useless expenditure.

The betrothed of Neemnath, is the inmate of but a poor harem, while her promised husband sits in state within the neighbouring temple; the cave is small, and its mouth so closed up by large stones, that an entrance can only be effected upon the hands and knees.

Large numbers of Banians, pilgrims,

devotees, and travellers, daily ascend the sacred mount; but in February, a religious assembly, or Jattrah, is held, when thousands of people attend, and put the Sadowut to heavy charges.

We passed a week very agreeably upon Girnar, enjoying the pure, cool air, and taking drawings of the various objects of particular interest. Supplies are brought daily, by means of bigarries from Junagarh, the prejudices of the Jains being so powerful, as to induce them to object even to the milking a goat upon the sacred hill.

Girnar, is perhaps the most interesting and beautiful spot in Western India; Aboo and Palitana, are both, comparatively speaking, very modern, and advancing no claim to a Buddist origin. The sacred mount is almost equally interesting, whether considered with reference to its magnificent remains of art, and its historical claims, or to the great beauty of its wild scenery, and the reckless tribes who seek its shelter. Outlaws and religionists are

the inhabitants of Girnar; those, who like the Jains, practise a system of such extensive benevolence, that it includes even all tribes of animated nature, from the elephant to the ant; and such, whose hand is against every man, and who, defying their country's laws, exist only by the merciless pillage of their fellow men.

The scenery of the sacred mount is unequalled, even by the celebrated Ghauts of the Deckan. To the painter, and the poet, it must ever prove a source of inspiration; to the antiquarian and philosopher, a scene for speculation; and to the Christian visitor, a cause of deep regret, that so much which is beautiful both in nature and art, should be desecrated to the purposes of a false and misguiding faith. It is impossible to leave the temples, filled with huge idols of this pagan worship, and standing upon one of the peaks of the sacred mount, allow the eye to fall upon the magnificent scene around, without a feeling of something like wonder arising, that men who

first scaled this mighty eminence, and trod its pathless solitudes, should have been the builders of "Idol dwellings;" while every tree, and rock, and cloud in nature's realms, might, in this wild spot, have inspired a purer worship, and taught, that the prayers of man would be most suitably poured forth, amidst the glories of an unwalled temple,

——— "There to seek
The spirit, in whose honour shrines are weak
Upreared of human hands."



A Girnar Dooly.

CHAPTER III.

COURT OF HIS HIGHNESS THE NUWAUB.

——"Dwarfs, and blacks, and such like things that
gain
Their bread as ministers and favourites — mingled
there
As plentiful as in a court, or fair.

BYRON.

DURING our residence at Junagarh, we occupied a Serai, appropriated by his Highness the Nuwaub, for the reception of strangers. The principal bungalow is large, and commands an extensive view. The centre apartment is built in the native taste, without windows, whose necessity is replaced by wooden folding doors, opening

upon small stone verandahs. This plan is peculiarly inconvenient, as the inhabitant is compelled to remain exposed to either rain, cold, or hot wind, or exclude both light and air from the apartment. Fortunately, the sleeping-rooms, in addition to low clumsy doors, possess small square windows with iron gratings, which admit a sufficient circulation of both these great necessaries of life. Curious native paintings cover the walls of the apartments; and to judge by the profuse display of jewelled Rajahs by the native artist, princes must have been at a discount in the town of Junagarh. The court-yard, and verandahs of the Serai, we found fully occupied by travellers, Arab guards, and horsemen. The confusion commonly inseparable from a native crowd, increased by strings of frolicsome horses, picketted below the windows. These overfed animals, indulging fully in the dolce far niente, were in the acting capacity of mohsuls, or fines; during the imposition of a mohsul, his highness

the Nuwaub is constrained to pay whatever sum per diem may be deemed sufficient, to urge his conformance with the wishes of our government.

The windows of the serai, look on a large garden, much resorted to by the towns-people, and the whole country appears like a rich forest, being thickly planted with fine mangoe trees, which, during our stay, were laden with their luxuriant fruit.*

Junagarh is a Mohammedan town, containing about sixteen thousand inhabitants; the streets are narrow, and dirty, and the houses ill-built. It forms the capital of the territories of a Mohammedan independent prince, who oppresses his subjects, and drains the resources of a fine country, to support bands of Natchwomen, musicians, and mummers of every variety. The Nuwaub only quits his couch at sunset, and passes the night in the most de-

* May, is the mangoe season.

grading dissipation. His Highness has only four wives, which is the allowed complement of Mohammedan connubiality, but a seraglio of about fifty ladies.

The character of a prince, gives its tone to the court, and the ministers pander to their master's vices; in addition, the Nuwaub entertains a large number of Chelahs, or favourite attendants, all worthless and dissipated men. A party of these people, attired in the first style of Mohammedan dandyism, made their salaams to us the day after our arrival, and offered all sorts of attention and service, conveying also the request of his highness, that we would attend his Durbar the same evening, when I should be afforded the much desired gratification of an introduction to the harem.

The situation of Junagarh, renders it very little visited by strangers; the native society, therefore, retains its most peculiar habits, unmodified by foreign intercourse; I consequently considered myself fortunate, in the opportunity of becoming ac-

quainted with the manners of its inhabitants in private life.

About nine in the evening, a party of the Nuwaub's attendants, torch bearers and others, accompanied us to the palace, which is situated in the centre of the town. After passing the Arabs, guarding the entrance, we were introduced to a verandah on the ground floor, where sat his Highness the Nuwaub, surrounded by crowds of Mohammedan courtiers, torch bearers, and chob-dars, the last, loudly rehearsing the qualities and dignity of the Prince.

The Nuwaub, a short stout man of about forty years of age, with a peculiarly fair complexion, slightly marked with smallpox, was simply attired in a fine white muslin turban and ankrika.

His heir, the young Prince Ahmed Shah Bawamere, a fine intelligent looking boy of twelve years old, sat on a cushion at his father's feet; and with his sword smartly sheathed in green velvet, his

crimson and gold turban, and a military swagger, which his attendants had laboured to produce, he really appeared a miniature Prince of considerable promise. The Nuwaub placed me on his right hand; but the heat, the glare, and the din of Natch-women and attendants, was altogether so overpowering, that I could with difficulty understand the dignity of my position.

A Natchwoman of considerable skill, but most particularly hideous, was, with a voice " which clove through all the din," screaming out some verses of a Persian song, in most discordant, and ear-piercing tones. However, as the perfection of good natching consists, in the perfect unity preserved between the feet and hands of the dancer, and the time of her accompaniment, and as it was in this case admirable, the danseuse gained proportionate applause.

After an hour passed amidst the stunning diversions of his Highness' Durbar, I requested permission to enter the harem.

Emerging from the verandah into the open court-yard, a slave conducted me up a flight of steps, into a room, fitted up to resemble a tent, and from thence into the apartments appropriated to the harem. The first, was a spacious hall, surrounded with lights, but otherwise unfurnished; and from this, I was ushered upon a spacious terrace prepared for my reception. The floor was covered with fine scarlet cloth, and the low parapet wall hung with Persian carpets. Chairs were ranged along the centre, and slaves bearing torches, stood upon the edge of the carpet. The wives of his Highness advanced to meet me, magnificently dressed, and blazing with innumerable jewels. Seating me upon the centre chair, they drew the others round, and began to chat on various subjects, with great good nature, and much courteousness of manner. The principal wife, the Rahit Bucktè, was good-looking, and about four-and-twenty years of age; her manner was lively, her con-

versation unusually intelligent, and her round fat face irradiated with good humour. The second lady, the Dosie Beebee, had the airs of a coquettish and spoilt beauty, her dark languishing eyes rendered still more attractive by a very judicious application of the radiance-giving Soormay,* and her henna tinted, and delicate little feet, appearing to sustain with difficulty, the weight of her pearl-embroidered slippers. The Ameer Bucktè was a staid person, richly dressed, but without any personal attractions; and the Beebee Bhoe, was absolutely frightful.

The ladies were attired in a similar costume, of Kincaub trowsers, tight at the ancle; a full, richly embroidered satin petticoat, with a little cholah or boddice, and a saree of coloured gauze, embroidered with gold flowers. Their glossy hair, simply braided across the forehead, was adorned with strings of fine pearl: about a dozen costly necklaces hung over the

* Antimony.

cholah's of each, and the ear-rings, toe-rings, nose-rings, bracelets, and anclets, were innumerable.

The Beebees had not, on any previous occasion, met a European lady, and they perplexed me with questions upon our manners and habits of passing time. They expressed particular interest about our fancy works, of which Mohammedan ladies are great admirers. The Rahit Bucktè desired her slave girls to bring some cholahs of her own embroidering, which displayed great ingenuity, neatness and taste. After chatting for some time, I suggested the necessity of a return to my party, who I concluded were weary of the Nuwaub's method of shewing them attention. On this hint, pân suparree appeared, upon superbly chased silver trays, covered with crimson and purple velvet napkins, embroidered with gold, and edged with a deep gold fringe.

The usual quantity of dry suparree nut,

pân leaves, and spice, having been deposited on my lap, and my luckless apparel deluged with sandal oil and rose water, each of the ladies threw a wreath of Mogree flowers on my neck, and pressed me to visit them on the following day, proposing to accompany me to the Nuwaub's favorite garden, at the foot of the Girnar.

Anxious of course to cultivate the acquaintance of my gentle friends, I readily acquiesced, and descending to join my party in Durbar, we all returned, gratified, and fatigued, to the Serai.

The following morning at eleven, Sheik Mahmoud, the favorite Chelah of his Highness, summoned me to the harem, and was accompanied by an attendant, laden with fine mangoes, as an offering from the Nuwaub. On entering the palace, I did not as before visit the public reception rooms, but was received by the Rahit Bucktè at the door of her own apartments. Her attire was little less splendid than that

worn in the evening, for the ladies of the east, only happy in being well attired, have not any nice distinctions between the fitness of particular toilettes ; the ease, and simple beauty of a morning deshabille, which distinguishes our English taste, is unappreciated; and a mid-day sun, whose beams pierce the jalousies of an eastern harem, blazes on glittering jewels, which with us, are considered fit only for the glare of festal lamps.

Surrounded by slave girls, all chatting merrily together, and some with their infants in their arms, we proceeded through a suit of several apartments to the Beebee's sitting room. There was an air of privacy and quietness, about this little Mohammedan boudoir, particularly inviting; and while its arrangement promised an unusual degree of comfort, a free circulation of air was insured by its height. Numerous windows of wrought stone work which surrounded it, afforded the fair inmate a charming view of the sacred mount, and

the fine minarets of the neighbouring musjids, towering above the majestic trees which skirt the town.

Seated next the Rahit Buckté, I had full opportunity for admiring the taste with which her apartment was adorned. The floor was covered with crimson cloth, over which was tightly strained linen of spotless purity; and the ceiling concealed by a fine white cloth, embroidered with gold stars, the produce of the celebrated looms of Ahmedabad. A rich border wrought in gold represented a cornice, to the edge of which was attached a flounce of crimson and green silk. From the corners depended green glass lamps; and on one side of the floor, rested a pile of cushions, covered with a Palampore, or coverlid, of Tyrian purple, broidered and fringed with gold. The colours, though so varied, were harmonious, and the combined effect was one of richness, rather than gaudy display. The walls of the apartment, beautifully whitened, were decorated

with Chinese paintings, and looking-glasses in gilt frames, while the spaces were occupied with little gold and silver Golaubdanis,* and enamelled lotahs, suspended in bead nets.

As the Beebee's Mehtah or steward was present, a fine gray-bearded intelligent looking man, I ventured to enquire what were her pecuniary resources, as I felt a little anxious on the matter of Mohammedan husbands' generosity, and the weighty affair of pin money.

The Rahit Buckté most unreservedly explained, that on her marriage, the Nuwaub had bestowed on her a gras or estate, consisting of eight villages, which she farms on her own account. The chief produce consisted of mangoes, but the value of the villages varied; the whole seemed to average, about three hundred rupees, or thirty pounds, a month.

The Rahit Buckté proved herself during our conversation, to be a good woman of

* Rose-water sprinklers.

business, quite au fait on the subject of grain, ploughs, mangoe trees, et cetera, from which her revenue is derived; large ledgers, written in the Guzzeratee character, were produced, and particular pages readily referred to, in explanation of the subject. Her estate, the Beebee told me, was situated between Junagarh and the sea, where the country, from its natural fertility, was called the Neil Nagir, or land of the blue waters. The Rahit Buckté is considered a miracle of learning by the inhabitants of the harem; she reads and writes Persian, Guzzeratee, and Hindostanee, which she acquired from her father's priest or peer, when a little girl. The Nuwaub had married her as a widow, which is a very unusual circumstance in Mohammedan families.

Fully aware of the strict system of seclusion which forms the etiquette of the harem, I was surprised to find her Mehtah admitted to her presence; but she said, with the Nuwaub's family, it was usual to

receive personal attendants of either sex; but that the servitors of one Beebee, were excluded from the apartments of the rest, if of the forbidden sex.

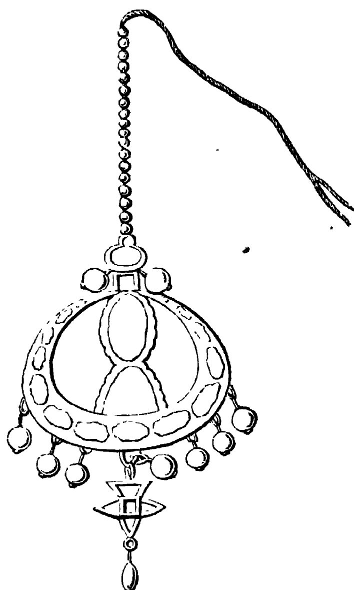
The Beebee chattered a great deal, and made many enquiries into our customs of marriage, baptism, and dress. Her great curiosity, however, seemed to be awakened on the peculiarity of our owning the rule of a female sovereign; and she desired to know whether our queen's power was great; whether she sat supreme upon the gaddee, or throne of England; whether she rode on horseback, as I assured her was customary amongst English women; and whether her Majesty showed herself in open durbar amongst the men. She seemed a little incredulous when I told her the power of our queen far exceeded that of Alia Bhye, and that she was more learned, more beautiful, and more wise than the celebrated Noor Jehan. The Rahit Buckté then enquired what jewels our great Ranee wore. And when I de-

scribed the countless diamonds which adorn the royal crown and stomacher, the Beebee, the slave girls, and the grey-bearded Metah, all, with one impulse, lifted up their hands, exclaiming "Allah Kureem! rast ust?" (God is merciful! but *can* this be?) The Beebee's surprise subsiding, she insisted upon writing the queen's name in the fly-leaf of her Koran; but the Guzzeratee language not possessing the necessary V, a *W* became the acting capital, and our royal lady's name most grievously transformed.

The Rahit Buckté accompanied me to the apartments of the languid, but pretty, Dosie Beebee. It is well arranged that the wives of the Nuwaub have all separate apartments; which prevents domestic bickering, and the exhibition of many of those little arts, practised by ladies, whose leisure affords them abundant time to become proficient in the science of ingeniously tormenting. Here the fair rivals never meet, or even hear of each other, unless from the

prattling of slaves. I asked the Rahit Buckté, on our way to the Dosie Beebee's apartments, whether she liked, or was intimate with, any of the other ladies; but she said, "No; they were too idle and illiterate to be agreeable friends."

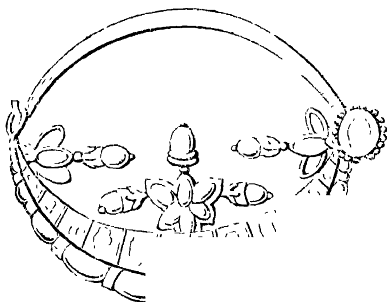
On our entrance, we found the beauty seated upon a silver swing, in the centre of her apartment, reclining on a pile of cushions, and smoking a rich silver hookah. The swing was suspended by silver chains to the ceiling, and an old slave, squatted on the floor, kept it in gentle, but perpetual motion. The Beebee's attire, was composed of a petticoat of fine Dacca muslin, embroidered with gold flowers; a crimson gauze saree shaded her soft cheeks; and a row of large pearl was entwined with the knot of glossy, black hair, gathered low, in the Greek style. From this, a double line of smaller pearls fell over the parting of the front hair, and supported a dazzling jewel, called a Tika,



Tika—true size.

formed with large diamonds and uncut pearls. The Nutt, or nose jewel, was composed of gems of the finest water, to match the Tika, and beautifully set in fine Venetian gold. A string of pearls was attached to this ponderous ornament, which, crossing the left cheek, hooked into the hair by

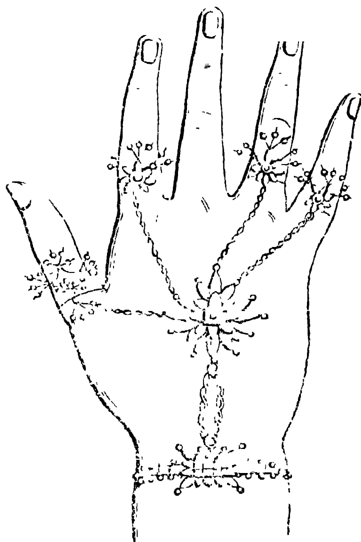
means of a small golden hook above the ear, and relieved the wearer from its unpleasant weight. When this jewel is withdrawn, a small peg of black wood is placed in the aperture of the nose, to prevent its closing.



Nose Jewel—true size.

A very becoming ornament, worn by the Dosie Beebee, on her pretty hands, is a bracelet of diamonds, rubies, and emeralds; to which a double chain suspends a large star, which rests upon the back of the hand: to this is attached chains, which support elegant and prettily designed rings, worn upon the first, third, and little fingers, leaving the second unadorned. A

similar ornament is worn upon the feet; each is valued at seven hundred rupees.



Hand Jewel.

The mother of Ahmed Shah Bawamere was present. She was engaged in tenderly nursing a pretty baby, about four months old, its little face dimpling with smiles, as if excited by the embryo vanity of being gaily decked with an azure velvet cap, embroidered with gems.

This lady, whose manners are particularly soft and attractive, is not the wife of the Nuwaub, but, as the mother of his acknowledged heir, meets with great respect and consideration.

The Beebees are unblessed with offspring; and a ladye love of the fickle Nuwaub's, endeavours to enlist his feelings in favour of a child, whom she desires should succeed to the Gaddee, to the prejudice of Bawamere. The court is thus torn by intrigues, in which the priesthood take an active part; fortunately, the Beebees espouse the cause of Ahmed Shah, and his interest is strengthened by a betrothment having taken place between him and a pretty little maiden, the favourite niece of the Dosie Beebee.

An incident, peculiarly calculated to interest an imaginative mind, occurred on this visit. The hour of noontide prayer was approaching, but all were yet engaged in their secular affairs. The Rahit Buckté was eating pân leaves, a never-failing resource to a native lady; the Dosie Beebee

was chatting with me on all sorts of mirthful matters; the little Bawamere, seated at his mother's feet, was cultivating the incessant chucklings of his baby brother; half the slave girls had lain down, oppressed with the noontide heat, and the rest were listening to the light tinklings of a sitarr, when the call of the Mowuzzin resounded from a neighbouring minaret. A momentary hush succeeded; all rose, and, standing with hands meekly folded over their bosoms, a chorus of soft voices responded throughout the harem, "Allah il Ukbar,"—God is merciful.*

Sheik Mahmoud having informed us of the readiness of the escort to accompany us to our fête champêtre in the royal garden, we descended to the court-yard; the Rahit Buckté, the Dosie Beebee, and Dada Bhoe, all scuffling along, as rapidly as the

* The Mohammedans have five forms of prayer used during the twenty-four hours. "Allah il Ukbar," are the words proper to be used at noon, and are repeated four times.

prospect of an agreeable visit could induce them to do, despite the inconvenience of toe-rings, anclets, and high-heeled slippers.

Awaiting us, was a Rutt, and a gaily-painted Palankeen. Dada Bhoe, with her infant, occupied the palkee; and the Beebees, with Bhawamere, took possession of the Rutt, bestowing themselves upon piles of cushions. The Rutt is a small description of cart, without springs, commonly used by native women in travelling. The Beebee's, however, was an unusually splendid equipage. Its covering was of crimson cloth, embroidered in white silk. The bullocks, pure white, and of the gigantic Guzzerat breed, were in the highest order; and the already enormous horns of each, lengthened by silver tips, from which depended bunches of silver bells. Silver peacocks surmounted their broad foreheads, and their bridles were bossed with plates of the same metal; each leg was surrounded by a bangle of silver bells, and

large sheets of crimson satin, embroidered with gold, covered them from the shoulders to the tail, and descended nearly to the ground.

All this splendour was admirable to behold; but I did not envy the curtained occupants of the Rutt, as I saw its springless frame jolted over the huge stones lying across the road, whilst I reclined commodiously in my little travelling palankeen, borne rapidly along by the hummalls or bhoies of the Nuwaub.

Arab guards, horsemen, chob-dars, and musicians, formed our escort; and glad, indeed, was I, when etiquette forbade the advance of these people farther than the entrance of the garden. The Rutt and palankeen entered, and were received by the chief eunuch, a handsome African, richly dressed, who is said to enjoy, to an eminent degree, the favour of his prince.

Beautifully situated, the garden is laid out, with fine mangoe and guava trees,

vines, and pomegranates; the sweet mogree uniting with roses and the fragrant chumpa, to give sweetness to the air. Streams of water, flowing through the garden, afford to the eye a sense of delightful coolness, and, by constant irrigation, preserve in perpetual freshness the rare plants of the parterre.

Beneath a widely-spreading mangoe tree, laden with its golden-looking fruit, was spread a crimson cloth, on which were placed baskets of the finest fruits. Pomegranates, with their rough and ruddy skin, guavas of a pale and tender green, bursting from excess of ripeness, plantains, in large and heavy bunches, water melons, and the dark and glossy jambu, surmounted by wreaths of the pure white mogree, linked with the jonquil-coloured chumpa, and the gaudy blossom of the red pomegranate. Interspersed with these choicely-laden baskets, were jewelled hookahs, Kincaub cushions, silver ewers, and drinking cups.

The Beebees, enchanted with the freedom they enjoyed, amused themselves with wreathing blossoms, which they threw on my neck, and twined in their own dark and glossy hair. Wearying of this simple pastime, they chatted playfully together, adorned me with their jewels, and then laughed heartily at my encumbered looks; listened to the songs of a slave, accompanying herself on the vina, and then inhaled the smoke of richly-adorned hookahs, whose delicately-scented goracco was tempered by the finest rose water. An oriental Boccaccio would have been inspired, by the luxurious beauty of the scene.

On returning to the Serai, I found the Nuwaub's bird-catcher in waiting, to make his salaam. His Highness patronises all artistes of this description, and delights in the exhibition of their skill. Fighting rams, buffaloes, and even exasperated birds, form the usual amusement of this dissipated prince, before the closing in

of evening, introduces his Taifahs,* musicians, and players.

The bird-catcher brought a cage full of fighting partridges, and a little paroquet of very finished education. As we desired to see what really were the accomplishments of the little bird, and whether the feathered tribes of Junagarh were addicted to gambling, and played dominos and piquet as well as those of Germany, I begged the exhibitor to afford us a proof of his pupils' skill.

Placing the paroquet upon the cross perch of a small stand, the bird catcher offered him a rod, with a wick attached to either end. This the bird grasped in the centre, with his beak, and suffered the wicks to be lighted, closing his eyes during the process, to avoid the glare. Holding the rod firmly, he began to turn his head slowly from side to side, as if to

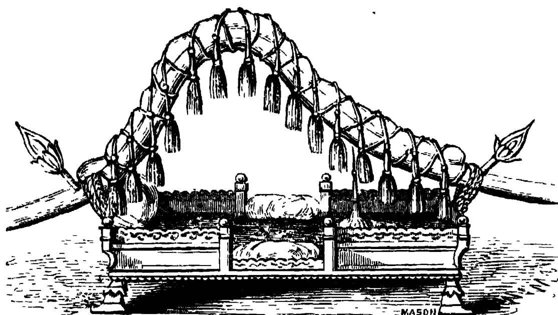
* Taifah, a band; commonly applied to Natch-women, and their attendants.

ascertain the correctness of the balance. At length quickening the motion, he twirled the rod so rapidly, that its form became lost to the eye, and nothing was distinguishable, but a circle of revolving light playing round the head of the bird. It was cleverly done, but the man assured me that a month's practice was sufficient to perfect any parrot of moderate capacity.

I had never before seen so mischievous a little creature, as a paroquet, deserving to be classed with either the educated, or the industrious working classes; their gay plumage, their clamorous voices, and the gay sunny life, these little plunderers lead, among the richest fruit trees of the country, mark them as the most luxurious idlers of the feathered tribe.

His Highness the Nuwaub expressed his intention of returning our visit in state; and an evening being fixed on for the occasion, the large room of the Serai was prepared for his reception, by removing

from it every article of our marching furniture but the chairs, which were arranged in a single line, opposite the grand entrance. At nine o'clock, the firing of guns, and beating of tom-toms, the squeaking of trumpets, and chattering of people, assured us His Highness had quitted the palace; in a few minutes, half a dozen breathless Chelahs announced that the arrival of the Nuwaub might be momentarily expected, and the room was instantly filled, by a general rush of ministers, torch-bearers, courtiers, and chob-dars.



State Palankeen.

His Highness arrived in his state palankeen, surrounded by horsemen, and followed by half the population of Junagarh. A rich golden chair was placed in the centre of our line of a humbler material, and amid the roars of chob-dars within, and the din of tom-toms without, the Nuwaub took his seat, with great ceremony. I had the honor to find myself between His Highness and the brother of the Dosie Beebee, a wild young chief of Natar.* The ministers, Chelahs, and attendants, ranged themselves in double sitting files along the room, leaving an avenue between His Highness and the door. We requested the company of the little prince Ahmed Shah Bawamere, and after a short delay, he arrived. Richly dressed, with crimson velvet slippers, abundance of "Barbaric pearl and gold," and gracefully holding his little sword, the boy walked up the crowded room, with an easy nonchalant

* A town situated about fifty miles from Junagarh.

air, heralded by a chob-dar, loudly repeating his praises, and titles; the men on either side rose as he passed on, and joined in an affirmative chorus. The young prince gracefully salaamed to his father, to the Dewanjee or prime minister, and to the principal people present, after which he took his seat, with the most graceful self-possession.

A Taifah of Natchwomen next exercised their skill for our amusement. The premiere danseuse, a tall and graceful girl, acquitted herself well, and sung some Persian songs in exquisite time and tune, with a pleasing modulation of voice, which was novel, tone being commonly sacrificed to noise. The girl was a native of Hyderabad, in the Deckan, and is entertained as a first-rate performer; and certainly this was the first time I ever felt amused by the exhibition of native dancing.

A much more novel entertainment, however awaited us—a theatrical exhibition by

four accomplished Thespians. Scenery or stage effect we had none; but the whole was in the very height of comic humour. The story of the farce selected was, that a rich Patan chief, leading a peaceful and happy life, with a single occupant of his harem, feels an irresistible desire to travel, and leaves his tender wife, half heart-broken, but somewhat reässured by his vows of eternal fidelity; mounting his fiery steed, the chief sets out, and after a long and safe journey, he meets a lady weeping on the road side, and as a widow, imploring his sympathy and protection. The Patan declares himself a bachelor, about to seek his fortune, and not caring to be encumbered; but honied words prevail—he marries the widow, and seating her behind him, returns to his own house. In the recesses of the harem, we see his first wife sitting desolate on the ground, her saree drawn closely over her face to conceal her grief, and lamenting, in tones of sadness, the absence of her beloved lord. A servant rushes in, and announces his return; the

wife springs up, and the faithless husband enters, carefully concealing his recent acquisition behind the folds of his travelling dress.

A dish of rice (represented by a turban) is brought in, and the husband and wife sit down, on the most loving terms, and commence their feast. A most absurd, and characteristic dialogue follows, in which the Patan, with all the empty boasting of a class, notorious for their Falstaff-like cowardice, relates the imminent escapes of his journey, how he was attacked by robbers, and how the spear of their chief produced a dangerous wound, ere his sabre levelled him with the dust; and how princes and chiefs rivalled each other to do him honour, for his valiant bearing, essaying as he told his vaunting tale, to conceal his starving companion, who sits crouching at his back, and whom he contrives to feed, by raising his hand in violent affirmation of his story, and dropping some grains of rice into her open mouth.

At length, discovery takes place; violent

reproach follows; the first wife pushes her husband against the second, and the second returns him to the first, and thus the poor man is made to rebound between his fair companions, until he falls to the ground exhausted, and the audience, amidst roars of laughter, discover the moral, which is somewhat singular for a *Mohammedan* farce—the evil of a duplicate of wives.

The hero of this petite comédie, who was really a mimic of considerable talent, albeit the ugliest, and almost the dirtiest man I have ever seen, next gave imitations of birds, after the manner of a ziffleur, and that, most admirably.

Seated upon the ground, with a saree over his head, he mimicked the Minar, with its conceited attempt at song; the Colah, or Mangoe bird; the Copper-smith, with its single, sharp, tapping note; the sweet gurgle of the Bulbul, and the caw of an excited and angry Crow.

Again, the same actor commenced a series of laughable caricatures of native

manners, and with no other aid than a long red scarf, and his own talent as a drôle, he carried you at once with him into the scenes he represented. We saw a proud Patan chief set out upon a restive Kattiawar steed for Ahmedabad; a Rajah smoking his hookah in full durbar; a horse-dealer puffing a bad steed; a dissipated chief, bargaining with a Shroff,* for the disbursement of his debts; all equally just, as delineations of native character.

The witching hour of night stole on, almost unperceived by us, amused with the novelties of the scene; but the Nuwaub, to whom all pleasure now brought speedy satiety as the punishment of undue indulgence, called for his Kusumba†. It appeared in a golden vessel, and was presented in a costly spoon of the same metal. Silver cups, filled with the favourite sedative, were handed to the courtiers; but native etiquette demands, that every one should serve his neighbour, rather than himself,

* A native banker, a usurer. † Liquefied opium.

and the warmest friendship is shewn, by obliging him to swallow more than he feels convenient.

On the present occasion, every one dosed his neighbour in the politest manner. The mode of supplying the Kusumba, is also prescribed in the code of Mohammedan etiquette. It requires, that the hand of the man highest in rank, should be formed into a hollow shape, and filled with the liquid, which is then poured down the throat of the inferior, who exposes himself to the imputation of being both an ill-bred, and an ungrateful man, if he swallows less than three hand-fulls.

About one o'clock, Pân Suparree announced the Nuwaub's departure; and the Taifahs, the minstrels, and the players, left us to the rare enjoyment of peaceful silence.

Our Junagarh gaieties were not yet concluded. The following day brought me an invitation to a buffaloe-fight, which I declined; but visited the Beebees daily,

every evening bringing me sweet garlands of mogrées, and piled baskets of delicious fruit. We received visits constantly from the people of the town, and the ministers of his Highness; amongst these I distinguished a fine Nagir Brahmin, the late Dewan of the Nuwaub. I have seldom met with any Hindoo so liberal in his opinions as Runchorjee, or so well acquainted with points of Eastern history, unconnected with legendary trash.

In manner, the Dewanjee is a well-bred courtier, dignified, graceful, and intelligent. His figure is tall, his complexion remarkably fair, and his skin possesses that peculiar transparency, which in advanced age, so commonly accompanies high birth and gentle breeding. Of Mr. Elphinstone, Runchorjee spoke with enthusiasm; and as a Persian scholar, appreciated fully the oriental learning of both this gentleman, and Sir John Malcolm, who was also personally known to him. Although himself a Nagir, the highest class of the Brahmi-

nical priesthood, Runchorjee possessed a grasp of intellect, which, while he preserved inviolate the strictest observances of his religion, induced him to admit the evidence of nature, and consider many of the legendary tales of the priesthood, as cunningly devised fables.

Speaking of the great blow the boasted antiquity of Brahminical chronology had so lately received, in the decyphered inscriptions of Girnar, Runchorjee observed; "The rocks the trees, the rivers I behold, and in them I see the hand of God; but for the vedas, the puranas, or any of the written works of man, who can trust them? My religion consists in doing my duty to my Creator, and acting benevolently to my fellow men; who does this, does well, be he Moslem, Hindoo, Buddist, or Christian."

Here, then, was Runchorjee, arrived at the same point of philosophy, the same condition for admitting external evidence, as they of old, who reared a temple, and de-

dicated it, "to the unknown God." The light of reason taught him to distinguish error, but truth was yet hidden from his view. My conversations with my intelligent friend, induced me to admire, yet half regret, that his mind was of such a calibre. When unusual faculties impel an individual intellect to outstrip the opinions of the times and people among whom it is cast, little good can arise, unless its productions anticipate the race of progress, and become a beacon to light men onwards. Runchorjee is surrounded by circumstances, all opposed to such a result; by reflection, study, and early intercourse with a few distinguished Europeans, he has acquired a respect for learning, a taste for the society of learned men, and some knowledge of the laws of governments and societies; yet as a Nagir Brahmin, he is bound to support the prejudices of the people, and to conform, both personally, and in his family arrangements, with the strictest rules of his caste. In Junaghar he is

without any society but that of his inferiors, both in rank and intellect; without any attendant circumstances, to alleviate a seclusion from all sources of general information. His family are of course totally ignorant; and Runchorjee's purity, and high-mindedness, does not permit him to compound for a paucity of general interest and recreation, by luxurious self-indulgence. Thus Runchorjee remains, admired by his superiors, solitary amongst his equals; renouncing evil, but unable to discover truth; his opinions warped by his prejudices, at the same time that his intellect warns him of their falseness.

As my present visitor was morally great, the next was physically small; in truth, a most good-natured little specimen of abbreviated nature. Our people had discovered and introduced him, knowing my love of curiosities, whether architectural or human. My little visitor's name was Ramjee; his figure was free from all defects, his countenance agreeable, and his

head well-proportioned ; his age forty-five, his height three-feet-eight, the length of his foot seven inches, and his hand four and a half. His parents he described as tall, and his family consisted of five brothers and sisters, who died in infancy. He was born at Elichpoor in the Deckan, and had travelled on pilgrimage to Dwaka; his caste was that of a Salee, or weaver, and he stated his capacity for eating a very excellent dinner, and of walking the enormous distance of seventeen coss, about thirty-five miles, a day.

The next party given in our honour, was held at the house of Dada Bhoe, where we were to meet his Highness the Nuwaub. We were received in an open court, spread with crimson cloth, and brilliantly lighted. After remaining here a short time, I was summoned to the private apartments. Dada Bhoe was simply attired in a crimson silk saree, with no other ornament than a richly jewelled nose-ring. It is curious, that the Beebees only, are permitted, with the exception of the Nutt, to wear jewels set; the

rank of the wearer being distinguished by peculiar styles of personal ornament. Dada Bhoe, presented me with abundance of sweet blossoms, tastefully wreathed, as punkahs, necklaces, bracelets, balls, and even rings. The little prince was seated at his mother's feet, and his fine eyes swam with tears of tenderness, as she smiled at the eagerness of his remarks.

Poor woman!—the sensual and capricious Nuwaub had treated her, of late, with coldness and contumely; he allowed her a pittance of two hundred rupees a month, but refused to see her, or provide for her infant child. The Chelahs intrigued to ruin her still more in his Highness's opinion, and, but for the protection of the Beebees, she would have been heart-stricken indeed. Gentle, loving, and patient, as she seemed, rouse but the mother's feelings in the heart of Dada Bhoe, and her large eyes' sparkling glance, told, that the spirit of a bereaved tigress would be meek, compared to the energy with which she would nerve

herself to support the birthright of her beloved son. Her great hope seemed to rest in the protection of the British government, whose influence with the Nuwaub, should be paramount.

On returning to the court yard, I found it filled with minstrels; and a man called Nusseer Khan, singing some Persian love songs very admirably. He accompanied them upon the vina; but also played with great taste and execution upon another instrument, resembling a large Neapolitan guitar, but played with a bow. The bowls of these instruments were formed of gigantic gourds, painted green, and richly gilt. The figure-board of one, was curved upwards, and finished with a large figure of a peacock, with its fan extended. The instruments were splendid, and the artiste's skill worthy of them; Nusseer Khan, was certainly the Huerta of Junagarh.

I had decided, that my last visit should be paid to the family of my fine old friend,

Runchorjee Dewan. As my own palankeen had been sent a march in advance, he courteously sent his own for my conveyance. It was a roomy and well-cushioned affair, gorgeously decorated; and between the front windows, was an image of "Ganesa the Sublime," with a favourite rat, as his emblem of superior wisdom. Runchorjee received me at the entrance to his house, and conducted me into an inner court, shaded with trellis, which supported fine vines, whose rich fruit depended in empurpled clusters; between the leaves, were cages of loories, and gaily plumaged parrots, doubtless sadly tantalized with the ripe feast, from which their prison bars restrained them. As the luscious gifts of nature thus formed our canopy, the fine produce of the carpet looms of Iran, were spread beneath our feet, and mummers and musicians collected for our amusement.

Among the crowd of friends who had gathered round Runchorjee on this occasion, I thought he appeared particularly

misplaced. His intelligent, and high-bred look; his graceful manners, dignified, and full of repose, yet softened by an inexpressible sweetness; his fair face, slightly furrowed with age; and his large black eyes, lustrous as burning lamps, illumined by the fire of intellect within, made him appear to me, more like one of the fine old Italian paintings of the papal priesthood, than, as he was, the head of a sect of ignorant Brahmins; and more suited to shine as the acknowledged patron of poets, men of science, and literary genius, than to be the minister of a bigoted and profligate barbarian.

The door of the court, in which we were all assembled, communicated with another, which divided it from the private apartments. The Nagir-Brahmins are eminently strict in all that regards religious tenets and observances—the quality of their food, their rules of intercourse with strangers, and the seclusion of their women; I therefore considered it a very great privilege to be

permitted an entrée into the harem of a Nagir family.

On entering the court, where the women had long assembled, with the most anxious curiosity, to see a being differing so completely in complexion, dress and manner, from themselves ; I was instantly surrounded by four generations of the Dewanjee's family—his wife, his daughters, his grand-children, and his great grand-children ; the Juru, * a fine old lady of seventy, had been a bride at ten years old, and the youngest of the family had not yet seen the revolution of a month.

The women were all gentle—a surpassing charm in womankind ; and some, very fair and lovely. They were attired in boddices, petticoats, and sarees of their own embroidering ; and it struck me, that mazarine blue, seemed their favourite colour. Their jewels were costly, and all wore the Tika and Nutt. The children were all smiles and good-nature ; and there was

* A Nagir marries but one wife, who is styled Juru.

something affectionate, even in the touch of their tiny soft hands. Their state seemed one of primitive innocence; they knew nothing to regret; the earth might have its flowers, and the heavens its stars, and the spirit of man might be tossed with the thousand doubts and fears that society bears on it, but they knew it not; these gentle beings lived only in the exercise of the simplest domestic affections, and living so, were blest. The young mothers, and the smiling maidens, had never crossed the threshold of their father's house; and the venerable Juru had grown, from a sunny-haired bride to a tottering matron, surrounded by the walls of her husband's home. No pleasures distract them, no cares appal—their ideas of the world and its society, are bounded by the towering summits of Girnar, and the cordon of their domestic circle. Their mode of living, is simple as their thoughts. They sleep on mats, spread upon native bedsteads of the commonest construction;

parched grain is their daily food, and water their only beverage.

Humility, it would be imagined, would be the leading principle, in minds educated by simplicity and abstinence. Not so; the pride of caste in the Nagir women is predominant, and prevents their visiting the wives of their prince, whom, as Mohammedans, they consider to be immeasurably their inferiors. All learning they are ignorant of; it is enough that they are Brahmin women, and of the family of a Nagir; in this distinction, is concentrated every thought. They can imagine nothing wiser, greater, or better, in the universe; and pride of birth to them, is the one thing needful, the abundant satisfaction.

It has been my good fortune to have seen much of native society amongst the gentler sex; but I have never met with such total absence of both information and curiosity, as in the family of Runchorjee. They are degraded indeed to a state of

mere animal existence, the only luxury of which, is the limited exercise of domestic affection. Their ignorance probably appeared more striking, as compared with the refined tastes of the Dewanjee himself; and it was truly grievous to observe, that the prejudices of sect and country, should erect such powerful barriers against family sympathy, and so humiliatingly degrade one sex, as even to render them incapable of understanding, that the other could possess wisdom.

I found it a hopeless task to endeavour to interest beings whose lives were so primitive, in any of the customs of the world about them; a certain number of simple ideas must exist in the mind, before complex ones can be introduced, or formed; and even these, of the quality I required, were wanting; so, in my own defence, I commenced tea-making, endeavouring to afford a practical illustration of the distinctions between the chemical processes of decoction, and infusion. The Dewan-

jee had, when on a visit to us, expressed a wish for some tea, which I sent him; and he complained that it did not at all resemble in taste some which he had taken on the recommendation of Sir John Malcolm. I fancied my friend's capacity for enjoying this pleasant beverage, had been lost in the lapse of time, until I discovered that his daughter, having put a handful of my pekoe into a cooking utensil, with sugar, milk, cloves and ginger, had boiled it for an hour together, and presented it to her father, in a wine-glass, without straining!

This sufficiently explained the mystery; and having obtained a teapot, banished the ginger and cloves, and substituted a cup for a wine-glass, Runchorjee had again the supreme felicity of enjoying "the cups which cheer, but not inebriate."

As I was about to leave the harem, the Dewanjee's daughters crowded round me, seizing my hands, and using every term of sisterly endearment; and the poor old Juru laid her trembling hands upon my

head, and bade me, as her daughter, visit them again. I was much touched by the gentle sweetness of this simple family ; and on returning to the Dewanjee, I expressed the gratification I had felt in observing so many of the purest feeling of the female heart, in full exercise amongst his family, notwithstanding the limitation incident to their secluded state.

A conviction of the sacred duty of paying honour to parents, is characteristic of the natives of the East ; yet the generality of a virtue, does not conduce to render individual graces less pleasing ; the mingled tenderness and respect, therefore, observed by all the members of the Dewanjee's family towards his poor old wife, struck me as peculiarly charming

In the outer court, some players were introduced but they were mere buffoons, and the appearance of Pân Suparree, soon afforded me permission to depart.

In returning through the town, I found the bazaars brilliantly lighted, and a bustling market held, noisy, with all the cha-

fering of good chapmanship. Cooks had established themselves in the centre of the streets, and the air was redolent of well-spiced currys, kabobs, and other Indu-gastronomic delicacies ; a hungry stranger might enjoy an excellent feast amongst the itinerant restaurants of Junaghar.

CHAPTER IV.

THE UPAH KÔTE AND HILL OF THE DATAR.

"There is a temple in ruin stands,
Fashioned by long forgotten hands;
Two or three columns, and many a stone,
Marble and granite, with grass o'er grown."

BYRON.

PEEPING from amidst the luxuriant foliage which clothes the suburbs of Junagarh, may be seen the time-stained walls of an ancient Rajpoot citadel, which, bearing the title of the Upah Kôte, is invested with considerable interest. Erected upon a sandstone rock, at an elevation more considerable than the modern city, this fort is not only itself a picturesque

object, but commands a magnificent view of Girnar, and the neighbouring country. The rock on which it stands, was originally excavated to form the walls, which are connected by substantial bastions, one of which is sixty feet in height. It is defended by a ditch, to the west and north; and is, on the whole, a very fine specimen of eastern fortification. Little is known of the early history of the Upah Kôte; yet that little, is replete with the legendary lore so charming in Indian story. It is said, that about A.D. 1467, Mandalik Rajah, a Rajpoot Prince, supposed to be the last of the race, who had possessed dominions in Surashtra for nineteen hundred years, resided at a town distant about ten miles from Junagarh. A servant of this prince, a simple woodcutter, prowling, axe in hand, about the forests of Girnar, discovered, to his astonishment, a fine fort, with bastions, moat, and gates, but uninhabited. Relating this strange matter to the Prince, Mandalik hastened to ascertain its truth,

and indeed found, as his servant had reported, a wonderful fortification upon the western side of mount Girnar, in which were vestiges of human habitations, and four wells, two of immense proportions. Mandalik determined to make it his seat of government; and ignorant of its previous history, styled it simply, Junagarh, or the old town. The prince did not, however, long enjoy his new possession: in A.D. 1472, sultan Mahmoud Bigarrah became infatuated with the desire of capturing Girnar and Junagarh; and after a great exhibition of power, compelled the submission of Mandalik, and obliged him to become a convert to the faith of Islam. Charmed with the exquisite beauty of the spot, the sultan determined to make it his favorite hunting seat, and built a new city, which he entitled Mustafabad, since known as the modern Junagarh. In process of time, the fort of the woodcutter became deserted, and received its present name of the Upah Kôte, or upper fort.

The keys of the fort are, as a matter of ceremony, in the charge of his Highness the Nuwaub; but he obligingly sent them, with an order for our admission. Time, with its lichens, grass, and clay, had hermetically sealed the larger gates, against the intrusion of the stranger; but a small side doorway, afforded egress to an avenue, guarded by Mohammedan soldiery. The first object which claimed our attention, was a huge image of Ganesa, smeared with coarse red pigment; and as if the sculptor had considered mirth to be an attribute of wisdom, the Hindoo Janus is represented in a state of considerable, and happy inebriation; his goodly proportions, strangely contrasting with the emaciated appearance of the guards. High walls, which flank the avenue, exclude all circulation of air; nature takes her revenge, and few appearances can be more horrible, than the pallid hue, the skeleton frames, and the protruding eyes of the men, who pass their days in this unhealthy spot.

Even in this trifling instance, the apathy of the eastern character is observable. The sufferers are fully aware, that a few minutes' walk to the higher ground, would be repaid by the enjoyment of an invigorating breeze; but they prefer wasting life, to making the necessary exertion.

The fort contains numerous remains of its ancient habitations; stones differing from the soil, strew the ground, or lie in separate and considerable heaps; but the whole is tangled with jungle plants, and overgrown with leafless trees of the Sita Phul, or custard apple, whose small and stunted fruit, impoverished for lack of irrigation, resemble rather the ivory imitations for which Surat is famous, than the living and luscious burthen of this highly estimated contributor to a Mohammedan dessert.

On the highest point of ground, remains a fine Jumma musjid, or Friday mosque; the roof supported by lofty pillars, and the interior adorned with

highly polished, and richly chiselled marble crypts. The terraced roof commands an extensive view; and from it, rise graceful minarets, twenty feet in height.

This prospect is indeed lovely; the wide plain of Kattiwar, stretching away far as the eye can reach, intersected by sunny streams, and Topes* of luxuriant trees; the temple-crowned hill of Girnar, its richly wooded ravines, winding causeway, and sacred rock; while below, rests the modern city, stirring with life, and surrounded by rich and productive gardens.

The only remaining object yet traceable in their original forms, are the wells mentioned by the Surashtra historians, and a cannon seventeen feet long, and five in circumference, which bears the tolerant Arabic inscription, that "This gun was made, for the extinction of all infidels."

The wells are curious, and distinguished as the Krore, and the Bhowree. The Krore is excavated to a depth, it is dangerous to contemplate; a shaft runs round

* Topes; small plantations, or clumps of trees.

it, from the mouth to the base, with windows looking into the well. Apertures are bored in its sides, for the accommodation of pigeons; and the disposition of the surrounding ground, induces the opinion, that this spot was, in olden times, planted and adorned for the pleasurable recreation of the Mohammedan princes of the Upah Kôte. A fine basin, which is excavated here, and adorned with richly carved edges, is said to have been used on festive occasions, to mix the favourite Kusumba in; its size however, would better suit it for a bathing place, than an oriental punch bowl.

The Bhowree is a well of the usual form, with a handsome flight of steps leading down to it. Its walls are laced and garlanded with luxuriant verdure; but the water is still esteemed for its purity and sweetness.

The relics of antiquity in the Upah Kôte are few; but its locale and early history, legendary and obscure as it is,

sheds on the darkened walls, and ruined stones of this old fortress, associations, which, connected with the discoveries of modern times, are rife with interest.

Another spot worthy record, in the neighbourhood of Junagarh, is held sacred by the Mohammedans, as the hill of the Datar, or giver. The saint whose reputed acts, cast over it this odour of sanctity, has been, under the title of Jemial Shah, honoured with cenotaphs in various parts of India, although of Sindhian origin, and his canonized remains, reposing in fact, at Táttá. The worshippers of the Datar, relate, however, that Jemial Shah, travelling through Kattiwar, was charmed with the beauty of their sacred hill, and became anxious to build a hut, and establish himself on it, as his future residence. A party of Fakirs reproached, and ill-treated the holy man, who, weary of a world containing so little benevolence, determined to abandon it. Leaving his garments at the mouth, the saint entered a cave on the

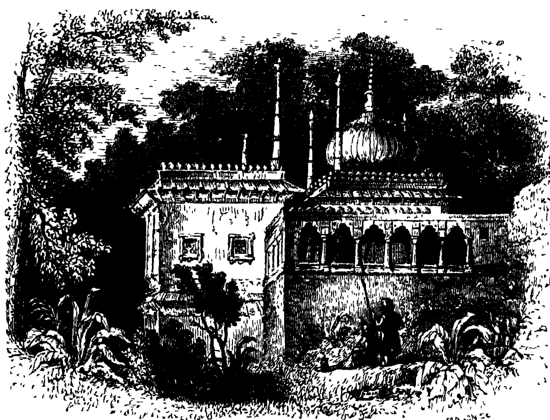
summit of the hill, from whence he has never since emerged. Conscience-stricken at this event, the offending Fakirs built a small, but handsome cenotaph, to the memory of the injured saint, and laying his garments in order, worshipped him with the usual ceremonies. On the evening I had selected for my pilgrimage to the hill of the Datar, the sun was setting when we arrived at the cenotaph. Numerous torches cast a full glare of light over the interior decorations of the holy place; the gilding, the looking-glasses, the painted eggs, and the garments of the saint, shone with unwonted brilliancy, and crowds of Mohammedans, were engaged in offering up their evening prayers. As each individual ascended, they bent the knee, and prest their lips to the steps of the venerated building; which service was rewarded, by the presentation to each, of a morsel of cocoa-nut, rendered sacred, by a momentary abiding on the apparent tomb of the Datar. On the exterior of the cenotaph,

are suspended bunches of various toys; these, purchased by Mohammedan mothers, are supposed to ensure the well-being of their offspring.

Facing the cenotaph of Jemial Shah, and resembling it in form, is an enclosed tomb called the "Datar Chelah,"* surmounted by a richly gilt ornament, and flanked by an exquisitely wrought musjid. Surprised that the worshipping crowd paid it no homage, and that neither the odours of frankincense, nor the glare of torches, marked it as a venerated spot, I advanced to the steps, and over the richly chiselled entrance, observed a black marble tablet, inscribed as "Sacred to the memory of Joseph Dykes, infant son of Major N. D. Ballantine." The tomb, and musjid, are expensive, ornate, and singular monuments of the ostentatious, and peculiar feeling of a European father, selecting this mode of conciliating native opinion. For twelve years, an allowance of two rupees a month

* Literally the adopted, or favorite of the Datar or Giver.

is said to have been made, for flowers, oil, and frankincense; and during this period, the tomb of Colonel Ballantine's son shared consideration with the cenotaph of the saint, but both largess and worship have since been discontinued.



Datar Chelah.

The power of the Datar, is supposed to be peculiarly shown upon this spot; and his aid is here, it is believed, most successfully entreated. Numerous poor people, from all parts of Western India, when afflicted with leprosy, travel hither, and

enter into vows to remain, until the merciful Datar vouchsafes a cure. If their sufferings from this cruel disease are of long continuance, suicide is commonly the result; the belief being general, that in the event of a leper dying a natural death, the disease descends to his posterity. A few days before we visited the sacred hill, an aged leper desired permission from the British authorities, to cast himself into the sea at Mangrole; this being refused, he left Junagarh, and about three miles from the city, the aged sufferer caused himself to be buried alive; his only son, for whose immediate sake the act was committed, covering the grey hairs of his afflicted parent, with an earthen water vessel.

As the shades of evening fall over the wooded heights of the sacred hill of the Datar, it is a touching sight, to see numbers of unclad lepers, with streaming hair, and firmly clasped hands, seated near the narrow pathways, their emaciated bodies rocking to and fro in the fervency of the

act, and a murmured, but earnest prayer breaking forth, that "the merciful and good Datar would restore them to their children, and to their beloved, but far distant homes." In many cases, twenty years has witnessed the same petition, yet healing comes not. Hundreds perish from cold, and disease, and many become the prey of wild beasts, who haunt the jungles of the mount. Lions are numerous, and may constantly be seen, during early morning, or shortly after sunset, crossing the most frequented paths.

The gentlemen of our party, visiting the Mount on a hunting expedition, in search of Sambur, encountered a lion of unusual size, near the cenotaph of Jemial Shah, close, in fact, to the public road. The noble brute paused to survey the group, and no symptom of intended attack being apparent, moved slowly and majestically onwards, and was lost in the thick underwood of the neighbouring jungle.

The Sambur, which abound in the Gir-

nar and Datar Hills, are very beautiful, but singularly timid animals ; the natives sometimes stalk them, as the huntsmen of the Highlands do the red deer of their native wilds ; but the method adopted by European sportsmen, is, to go late in the evening of a moonlight night, to the vicinity of some clear mountain stream, and there, having previously erected a bower of leaves beneath the shelter of a widely-spreading tree, await the thirsting animals, when a well-directed shot is sometimes successful. In this manner of conducting the sport, great precaution is necessary, as the slightest sound, even the click of a trigger, if not muffled, will send the whole herd of Sambur bounding back to the fastnesses of their mountain home, and the mortified sportsman is constrained to be content for the rest of his eager watch, to see a sounder of wild hog, or a few unwieldy Neil Ghye, quench their thirst at the borders of the fair stream, whose attractions promised him superior sport.

The horns of the Sambur, which are sometimes found by the peasants in the jungles, are highly prized, and sold for a considerable price. Very few European gentlemen visit these hills for the purposes of sport ; as the Cooli tribes, who inhabit them, are sometimes roused by the report of a gun, and salute the stranger from a distance, with a very unfriendly discharge of matchlocks, as he leaves his lair in the early morning.

The favourite amusement in Kattiwar, is lion-hunting, and the noblest of these brutes frequent the plains. Hunting elephants are kept by such as can afford the immense attendant expences of food and keepers ; but a reward offered by government for the destruction of both lions and Cheetahs in the province, has considerably diminished their numbers.

A notable elephant, now in Kattiwar, has had four lions slain from its back, without the removal of the howdah ; it has been severely wounded in many engage-

ments, and is now, by all lovers of this noble sport, appreciated as a sort of hero in his way.

The elephant is, perhaps, the strongest instance to be found in the animal kingdom, of the power of fear in controuling the will. The Mahout governs a trained elephant, simply by means of a small iron crook, which, when he requires the animal to turn, he presses against the opposite ear. If he intends the elephant to stop, the driver presses the instrument on the centre of his head; and the regulated force of this action, comprises his power. Of the docility and instinct of the animal, many anecdotes are recorded, and I shall enlarge them by one, for whose authenticity, I have the authority of the owner of the intelligent creature, of whom the story was told. My friend, an officer in the Bengal service, possessed a handsome elephant, which he was accustomed to see fed with a certain allowance of grain daily; business requiring his absence, he confided

the care of his favourite to a worthless keeper, who, in the interim, stole and appropriated a large proportion of the grain, intended for the elephant's use. The poor animal daily grew more spare and feeble, missing at his usual feeding-time, the abundant feast supplied by his kind and generous master. My friend returned, hastened to his stable, observed the emaciated state of his favourite, and having had no previous reason to suspect the honesty of the servant, was at a loss to discover a cause for the evident alteration. The poor elephant, delighted at his master's return, trumpetted his welcome, raised his trunk as a salaam, and moved about, affording in his mute but expressive manner, every demonstration of joy. His feeding-time approached, and the full allowance of grain was placed at his feet by his dishonest and cruel keeper. The elephant, satisfied of his master's attention, industriously separated it into two distinct heaps, and having eagerly devoured the

one, left that which remained, and quietly walked to the opposite side of his stable. The truth thus conveyed by the gestures of the intelligent brute, flashed upon the mind of his master; the keeper, on being accused of the theft, and finding his unworthiness exposed, fell at the feet of his employer, acknowledging the aggression.

An elephant belonging to his Highness the Nuwaub of Junagarh, was usually driven daily, into the neighbouring jungles of Girnar, to collect green boughs to serve for fodder; with these, the animal would return to the court-yard of the Serai, and carefully unloading himself, pack them together for use, in the smallest and most compact manner. If his stable-door remained closed after the labour was concluded, he would pick up again one of the lightest and freshest boughs, and continue waving it in his trunk, to protect himself from the attacks of the numerous flies and mosquitoes buzzing around.

The Mahout who had the care of this intelligent and docile creature, frequently placed a little infant, about four-months old, at the elephant's feet, with the injunction of "Kubber dah," (take care), and the command was never disregarded. The animal would wave a bough over the little child, as it laid smiling on the ground; and if attempting to roll away beyond the spot where the father had placed it, the elephant would gently move it back again with his trunk, menacing meanwhile every creature who approached.

The native keepers of elephants, will not allow that the animals are influenced by the passion of fear; but declare their obedience to be an impulse of gratitude, and believe them to possess the reason peculiar to human nature.

A gentleman, late in command of the Bheel Corps of Guzzerat, possessed a fine elephant, to which the Mahout was accustomed to relate *Bhàts*, as they are called, or long stories, which he declared

his favourite animal understood, as perfectly as himself. The natives are celebrated for their talents as reconteurs; and since the time of Scheherazade, this seems to have been the favourite *Indian*, as well as "Arabian Nights' entertainment."

All native princes entertain Bhàts, as our sovereigns of olden time did Jesters; and among the labouring classes, it is common to see half-a-dozen half-nude people, with bare backs, but gaudy turbans, squatted, cowering round a bright wood fire, telling Bhàts to each other, until gun-fire in the morning. The most absurd legends are remembered for the occasion, and if these fail, the hiatus is filled up with treasured anecdotes of the "Saib Logue," a fertile source of raconting to such of the peasants as may have been brought into communion with European residents. Gossip is certainly one of the dearest privileges of the natives of India.

One of the most uncommon pets I have heard of, during my residence in the East,

was a young lion, which my friend, Capt. S——, found as a cub in the jungles of Kattiwar. As the little creature grew in stature and beauty, he displayed so large a portion of gentleness and affection, that no means were used to restrain him; and wandering about the Bungalow and compound as a domestic favourite, he won the attachment and confidence of every one around him. True, a stranger sometimes started, on being ushered alone into the drawing-room, and observing a young lion quietly reposing upon the Persian rug; but his character was soon known, and all admired the gentle qualities of the noble brute. On occasions of defection, and backsliding, in his usual behaviour, Capt. S—— would strike him slightly with a little riding-whip, on which the poor creature would rush into the dressing-room of his mistress, and cling round her feet for protection. When Capt. and Mrs. S—— were returning from their evening drive, "Snap" would spring for-

ward and leap into the buggy, half-mad with the delight of a rëunion. A little bull-puppy was an especial favourite with Snap; yet sometimes, as they both lay basking in the sun, the little lion would lift his royal paw, and administer the same to the poor pup, with an empressment which sent him rolling along the grass. Thus matters remained until the highly favored native of the jungle wastes, attained some eighteen months of age; when his master, having occasion to leave the station of Malligaum, directed "Snap" to be secured on a cart with luggage. Poor little fellow!—unfortunately, a few miles from the camp, Captain S. in his buggy, passed him, and the attached and excited little creature, springing forward to follow him, hung himself in his securing chain.

Cheetahs abound in Kattiwar, and the Shikarries frequently bring them while very young into the camp of Rajcote, where they are sometimes kept as pets.

A nest of four were brought to me on one occasion, by a native huntsman, who had discovered the little creatures in the Jungle depths, during the temporary absence of their mother. The captured animals were about the size of a large Persian cat, were very sleek, handsome in form, and beautifully marked; and as they lay rolling and playing together on the carpet, few attitudes could have been more graceful, than those displayed by the free, muscular, and finely formed limbs of these noble and (young though they were) majestic-looking little brutes. The Cheetah, as is well known, is of the same genus as the royal tiger, and although much smaller, has a similar nobleness of deportment. Hunting Cheetahs usually form part of the recreative establishment of a native prince, and the animals are capable of being trained to great activity and intelligence in the pursuit of prey. It is said, on native authority, that hunting Cheetahs have the same taste for

flattery, common to other Nimrods of the day. Sometimes the Cheetah loses his prey, and when this is the case, he becomes ferocious and dangerous to those about him; when this occurs, the keeper stands afar off, and exhorts him in a loud voice to be patient and contented; and as the Cheetah chafes at his disappointments, the huntsman vociferatingly lauds his exploits, and those of his maternal and paternal ancestry, with all of the Cheetah genus generally, assuring the foiled hunter of better success in future, and soothing him with the gratifying assertion, that Cheetahs of such famed prowess as his own, can afford now and then, to lose even important game. The Shikarries say, these well introduced encomiums always produce the desired effect, and the flattered Cheetah, thus subdued, suffers his hoodwink to be replaced, and himself led quietly homewards. It should be added, however, that as a trifling addition to his passion for fame, the Cheetah, possesses a considerable appetite, which,

while the bard recites his deeds of valour, receives plentiful gratification from a large supply of raw meat, provided to meet these emergencies of chance disappointment, on a hunting day.

It is curious that while Kattiwar abounds with the tiger and lion species, Cutch, the neighbouring province, should be free from this terrible infliction. The Rao of Cutch, at one period, had several dens filled with wild beasts; but finding them troublesome in the palace stables, he proposed turning them loose in the adjacent jungles of Wagur; fortunately, good advice on the matter was offered to his Highness, and in preference to visiting the peasantry with such a justly dreaded source of terror, he despatched his menagerie to Bombay, where the beasts arrived, to be a source of harmless and amusing interest.

CHAPTER IV.

HINDOO FESTIVALS.

THE DUSRAH, OR DOORGA POOJAH.

"In so enlightened an age as the present, I shall perhaps be ridiculed if I hint as my opinion, that the observance of certain festivals is something more than a mere political institution."

HORACE WALPOLE.

FACTS, perhaps, will not bear us out in the opinion, that idolatrous nations have all in turn, adopted the same objects of worship, under different titles; yet nature, as the primeval source of religious impulse, would, in all rude times, suggest the necessity of revering particular objects, varied

only by the effects of climate and position, on the passions and pursuits of men. Thus resemblances exist between the mythologies of the ancient world, presenting interesting materials for curious investigation, and possessing so many features in common, that an enthusiast may be forgiven, for assigning to them one broad origin, tracing their variations to the genius of nations, their climate, and their temperament. In considering the affinity which appears to exist between the characters, titles, and attributes of the gods of pagan nations, and the festivals originated in their honour, and waiving the disputed question, of whether the gods of Greece, Egypt, or Hindostan, were the most ancient deities, it is satisfactory to believe, that *all* may have been symbolical of the powers of nature, and have originated in the gratitude and reverence of man.

But a few years have passed, since England herself retained many gay and poetical celebrations, whose mystical cere-

monies may be traced to an age of darkness and idolatry. It is unnecessary to exaggerate the effects of civilization in refining the festivals of modern times; yet I believe that through the veil of distance, we may readily trace a shadowy origin to ceremonies, whose character of idolatrous mysticism has long been exchanged for the mirthful and innocent gaieties of a free and happy people. The merry frolics of our rustics, in the sweet season of May, their superstitions on Hallow-e'en, and their quips and cranks on All-fool's day, may find their prototypes in a ruder age, and be traced so far back even, as to the mystical ceremonies of the isle of Anglesey, where, according to our earliest historian, the Druids celebrated their mysterious rites on the altars of their sacred groves, deluging them with the blood of human sacrifice:*

Since our conquest of Poonah, and the successful termination of the Mahratta war,

* See Life of Agricola, by Tacitus.

the Hindoo festivals of Western India, have, year by year, lost much of their mysterious ceremonial; but the vestiges of Brahminical craft are still apparent, although circumstances have restrained their cruel and disgusting orgies.

The Dusrah, the most important celebration of the Hindoo year, is an autumnal festival, in honour of the many-titled mountain goddess. Doorga is poetically represented, as the daughter of old father Himalaya, and her temples are usually erected on the summits of the highest hills. She has been considered as resembling the Grecian Juno; and it is a curious coincidence in the parallel, that the peacock is sacred to Doorga, and in Hindoo sculptures, and paintings, she is represented as attended by one of these birds, who stands watchfully on her right hand; also, that as the Indian goddess of victory, she is worshipped under the title of Sverga Rádni Devi, or the Queen of Heaven. The most fearful of the incarnations of Doorga, is

that of Mahi Cali,* in which she commands sacrifices of animals, and even human victims, as seen in the Calica Puran, an ancient work, much valued by the Hindoos.

The festival of the Dusrah continues ten nights, as the word Dus-rah implies. On the tenth night only, offerings are made to the goddess in her form of Doorga, as during the preceding nine, distinguished as the Now-ratee, the goddess is supposed to be preparing and adorning herself, and is worshipped under the form of Bhowanee.† On the sixth day, she is awakened by sports and music, as she was supposed to have been originally aroused by Brahma, during a night of the gods.

Doorga, according to Brahminical au-

* Cali signifies black, and its root, *cal*, implies devouring; whence it is used as expressive of the destructive powers of the goddess.

† "Bhowanee," the origin of fertility, and the wife of Siva, the Creator, resembling, according to Sir William Jones, the Venus Urania of the Greeks.

thority, is said to have been formed from the brilliant glances which radiated from the eyes of the assembled gods. Her form was of exquisite beauty, and the deities from whom she was derived, bestowed on her a variety of armour and ornaments, and sent her forth with power to conquer vice, and exterminate the race of Rakhust, or demons, from the earth. On the departure of the great goddess, after many successful enterprises, from the scene of her victories, she enjoined her followers to propitiate her power on certain days, promising to secure them health, wealth, and good fortune. The festival of the Dusrah, is now celebrated on the days appointed by the goddess, and is solemnized with prayers, sports, and warlike exercises. In Western India, the Dusrah is most strictly kept at Poonah, where, during the Peishwa's time, the priesthood exercised the highest influence. A very superb temple, erected on a considerable elevation, and commanding a magnificent view of Poo-

nah, called Parbuttee, is sacred to Doorga; but I was also shown a spot particularly dedicated by the Brahmins to the performance of ceremonies, attendant on the celebration of the Dusrah festival. It is enclosed by a high wall, and strictly guarded from all chance of contamination from without; to this sacred spot, the Brahmins repair from all parts of Western India, and during the ten nights of the festival, celebrate their orgies secretly, and by torchlight.

Strangers are of course never admitted to witness these mysteries, as the very glance of a Christian, or an outcast, would steep the actors in them in impurity, which years of penance could not expunge; however, from intelligent Hindoos, and various sources of information, I was enabled to gain some curious particulars, of the observances which prevail.

On the first night of the festival, the Kalusa, or sacred-water jar, is cleansed, and consecrated by the officiating Brah-

mins; this vessel being considered as a symbol of the goddess, forms the principal object of worship during the Dusrah, and bears three curious signs, according to the three principal castes of Brahmins; these are hieroglyphic figures, denoting the character and attributes of Doorga; and so truly are their forms Egyptian, that many learned writers have engaged, from their coincidence, to prove the identity of the Hindoo ceremonies of the Dusrah, with those which celebrate the inundations of the Nile.

On the same night, offerings of attire, food, and sweetmeats, are made to the wives and daughters of Brahmins; and are continued during the whole of the Now-ratee, although specific gifts are particularly proper to each. Amongst these offerings, oils and perfumes, henna, antimony, cosmetics, sandal-wood, flowers, and a variety of unguents, supposed to enhance female beauty, are most conspicuous. On the sixth day, the Tulsi-tree,

and Cusa-grass, is worshipped; the Cusa is considered particularly sacred, and is daily used in the ceremonies of ablution; it is said to have sprung up soon after the deluge, and is believed to be the bristly hair of the boar, which the Hindoos affirm to have once supported the world.

On the seventh day, honour is paid to the goddess Suruswatee, the patroness of learning and the arts; and on the last day, pooj is made to all things, animate and inanimate. The soldier prays to, and praises his sword; the native artillery-man anoints the mouth of his cannon, smears it with a pigment of oil and turpentine, and decorates it with wreaths of red and white blossoms.

The gardener makes pooj to his implements of agriculture; and every artisan, to the particular tools in common use in his vocation. The native servants of Europeans observe the same custom, and each decorates the object of his care in a similar manner. The Gorawaller, or horse-keeper,

takes his master's horse to the river, and after washing him, ornaments his head and neck with fragrant wreaths of the Mogree and the Chumpa, and parades him round the camp. The Mussaul decorates the candlesticks with bunches of gaudy blossoms, and the Hummaulls festoon the palanquin, with the same floral emblems; the Sepoy twines them round his musket; and the Dirzi binds graceful garlands on his turban, and in his cummerbund. The air is richly laden with sweetness, and the bright blossoms so liberally dispersed, give an air of continental gaiety to the scene. The love of Asiatics for flowers, is carried to a very remarkable extent, and forms a pleasing trait in their general habits. *

* On the last day of the month, in which the Dusrah is kept, the Hindoos have a legend, which promises wealth to those who remain awake during the twenty-four hours; they therefore commonly pass the night in playing Pacheesee.

In return for the offerings made during the Dusrah, the worthy servitors expect some more substantial recompense, than oils, or cosmetics; a rupee, however, satisfies them, and they leave the donor a world of good-wishes and salaams.

All gifts and payments are considered peculiarly fortunate on this day, as also the realization of any hopes of success. Every man who follows the profession of arms should form part of a procession from his own village to a sacred tree called the Sami, and after shooting an arrow at it, each warrior placing a leaf in his turban, returns with songs and rejoicing to his house; by this act, the people hope to propitiate the goddess of small pox, who is an object of peculiar terror to the Hindoos.*

Feasting during this festival, is the principal enjoyment of the people, at all

* The ancient German warriors had a somewhat similar custom; that of crowning their javelins with coronals of leaves from the sacred trees.

times the one great satisfaction of the Hindoos; the quality of the food is simple and unstimulative, but the quantity consumed, remarkable. During the Dusrah, servants and dependants of all denominations, request money from their employers to purchase a sheep for sacrifice: and as the custom furnishes them with a good dinner, the ceremony is seldom omitted.

Sacrifices of buffaloe and sheep by the Brahmins, are usual during the festival; in the Calica Puran, various oblations are commanded to be made to Doorga in her form of Cali; but the pleasure the goddess derives from them, is said to be of very unequal duration. It is truly horrible, to peruse the code of forms commanded to be observed, for the sacrifices, which are said to afford the sanguinary goddess the highest gratification. They are remarkable however; more particularly those affecting human sacrifices, as they eminently display the cunning and personal care of their ecclesiastical framers. A woman or a Brahmin, it appears, may not be

sacrificed; neither the aged, the crippled, nor the diseased; but the victim must be of good appearance, and be prepared by ablution, and purifying ceremonies. On the day preceding the sacrifice, he must be adorned with flowers, anointed with oil, and smeared with red sandal wood. The sacrificer is commanded to worship his victim, and after the death blow is given, auguries are drawn of prosperity or otherwise to the sacrificer. A human sacrifice must only be made after the victim has attained his twenty-fifth year, extreme youth being unwelcome to the goddess.

Such are a few of the horrible laws which have been allowed to govern the ceremonies of these appalling rites. Yet fearful as they are, when the dreadful penances, startling superstitions, and authorized religious cruelties which pervaded the ancient world, are considered by the light of reason, it is scarcely subject for surprise, that fanatacism should complete the catalogue of terrors, by demanding human victims for the propitiation of its deities.

The subject of human sacrifice, is one which possesses interest of the deepest nature; and to the religious or philosophical enquirer into the history of nations, it presents material for study and reflection, unequalled by any other. Startling and appalling to human contemplation, as those institutes appear which prescribed *Murder*, as a rite acceptable to the deities, it is necessary to inspect and to review the whole fabric of the religious tenets of their pagan practisers, before the character of such oblations can be distinctly and rightly understood.

The doctrine of metempsychosis deprives self-sacrifice, which is yet common among Hindoo devotees, of the most fear-inspiring, and mysterious terrors attendant upon death; and the belief that the sins of a being, sacrificed to the terrible Cali, are forgiven, and the spirit of the victim received into the courts of heaven, as the first drop of his warm blood falls at the altar's foot, removed, doubtless, from the mind of the sacrificer, those dreadful and over-

powering emotions of horror which now oppress the enquirer on a mere contemplation of these dark and terrible rites.*

Happily, these blood-stained oblations have ceased in Western India; and the last of which I remember to have heard, was amongst the Brahmins of the Deckan, who long preserved the custom of yearly sacrificing an aged woman, on the occasion of the Rajah of Sattara's visit, to the fort of Purtabghur.

Sir John Malcolm states, that a sect of Kurradee Brahmins had a custom, at Poonah, of annually sacrificing to their infernal deities (Sactis), a young Brahmin; and as, according to the sacred books, if the victim is unwilling, the sacrifice is forbidden, to prevent the possibility of such an occurrence, the unsuspecting, but devoted one, is frequently the stranger, who for months or perhaps ars, has shared the hospitality of his murderer. The discon-

* I would refer the reader who may desire information on the rites of sacrifice, to the volumes of the Asiatic Researches, and to Mr. Ward's valuable work on the Hindoos.

tinuance of this custom is said to have arisen from the following circumstance, which forms a most touching melodrama of domestic horror.

A Carnatic Brahmin, oppressed with travel, sat to rest himself in the cool and shaded verandah of a Kurradee Brahmin, resident in Poonah. The host, perceiving the youth was a stranger, invited him to repose under his roof, and recover his fatigue. The unsuspecting traveller gratefully accepted this apparently kind invitation, and being domesticated in the family, and having seen and admired the Brahmin's beautiful daughter, as she bore her water vessels from the neighbouring well, he sought, and obtained her in marriage. Calmly and blissfully passed the hours, until the near approach of the great festival, when the Kurradee Brahmin determined to sacrifice his son-in-law to the terrible Cali; remorseless and unchangeable in his cruel purpose, a dish of rice, prepared with drugs, was the selected means for accomplishing his object. His grace-

ful and gentle daughter, however, perceived her father's terrible design, and devoted to her young and handsome lord, her bosom torn with agonizing and conflicting passions, she watched her opportunity, and as a last resource, placed the poisoned dish before her only brother, who, eating of its spiced contents, before the expiration of the feast fell senseless to the earth. The miserable father, well knowing the nature of the poison, despairing of his son's recovery, and firmly believing in the virtue of the sacrifice, as an expiation for the crimes of both himself and his victim, bore him to the temple, slew him at the altar's foot, and made his goddess an offering of his blood.

The young Brahmin, learning these dreadful facts from his half-frenzied wife, rushed to the court, fell at the Peishwàh's feet, and related the whole affair. As, according to Hindoo law, if a human sacrifice is performed without the consent of the Prince, the performer commits sin, orders were issued for the appre-

hension of the Kurradee Brahmin and his family, who themselves were put to death, whilst every priest of the sect was expelled from the city of Poonah, and their return forbidden by the heaviest penalties.

The Brahmins still sacrifice buffaloes on the festival of the Dusrah, and adorn them with flowers, gaily coloured cloths, and a preparation of red and yellow pigment; but during my own observation of the festival at Poonah, it seemed little more than a simple merry-making among the people, in which feasting and mirth, quite overpowered the influence of religious observance. This probably arose from the weakened power of the priesthood, which has gradually declined since the fall of the Peishwàh, and the establishment of British power in his dominions; and the chances are many, that in a few years, nothing will remain of the Dusrah, but its garlands and feasting; and the blood-stained rites of the sanguinary goddess will be remembered only, as a tale of other days.

CHAPTER V.

THE DEWALLI, OR KALEE POOJA.

"He looked and saw what numbers, numberless,
The city gates outpoured."

PARADISE REGAINED.

THE feast of lights, as the word *Dewalli* implies, is a very favourite festival, held on the commencement of the Hindoo lunar year; its celebration continues four days, and is the period fixed for the settlement of all debts and accounts.

On the first day of the Dewalli, the whole population of an Indian city bear branches of the Sami, Tulsi, and other

sacred trees, in procession; and walking round all the temples in the neighbourhood, offer salutation and prayer to their country's gods, in their several incarnations. * These ceremonies are incomplete, unless offerings of money, rice, and suparree nuts, are made to the officiating Brahmins. On the day following, prayers are made to the sacred books, the Vedas, and Puranas; to money, horses, account-books, and elephants; also to miscellaneous objects of respect, whether local or general.

* Each of the Dii Majorii of the Hindoos, claim a peculiar tree. The Bur, Ficus Indicus, is sacred to Siva. The Peepul, Ficus Religiosa, to Vishnu. And the Dawk, Butea Frondosa, to Brahma. The Israelites had a custom curiously in accordance with the Hindoo practice of bearing trees on appointed days, as appears from the command given in the 23rd chap. of Leviticus and the 40th verse; "And ye shall take you on the first day, the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and the willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God, seven days."

It is considered unfortunate, to pay money during the period of this festival, as any sum thus parted with, will, it is supposed, be lost to the trader, during the whole of the ensuing year.

The objects of the Dewalli would suggest, that wealth, and money as its symbol, being a source of the distinctions most coveted by men, in an ignorant state of society, should be considered worthy propitiation in the character of a divinity, whose favour might be secured by prayers and solicitation. This being, in fact, the case, a curious custom obtains, which has reference to this superstitious veneration.

The bankers, or Shroffs, of Indian cities, are in the habit of burying their wealth in some convenient spot, usually selected on the site of their dwellings; on any large draughts being made on them, the coins produced appear partially stained, or encrusted by a red pigment, acquired by the following practice.

On the second day of the Dewalli, the bankers, or Shroffs, disinter their treasure, with every provision for secresy, and place it together in a convenient apartment; the owner sprinkles it with a mixture of red lead and oil; a chafing dish, containing Loban, or frankincense, is placed near it; the worshipper prostrates himself, and with hands joined over the ascending smoke, invokes the Spirit of Wealth in the following terms,—

"Oh, Wealth! be thou propitious to my house, and keep adversity from my gate;—oh, money! depart not from me, and I will take care of thee, and worship thee, if for this year thou wilt dwell with me, and make me prosperous in all my business."

After this invocation, the banker replaces his treasure, rejoicing in the certain hope of the ensuing year's prosperity; as, whatever is invoked on this day of the festival, will, it is supposed, be propitiated for the remaining portion of the year.

The last days of the Dewalli, are devoted to feasting, gaiety, and mirth ; at the last celebration of this festival, in the province of Cutch, I was fortunately present at the principal exhibition of national rejoicing, honoured, according to ancient usage, with the presence of the reigning prince.

A fine plain, near the walls of the city of Bhooj, was the space appointed for the display of races and fireworks, the only public amusements which appear agreeable to native taste. The situation was judiciously chosen, and the general effect produced, remarkably picturesque. In the distance, appeared the irregular elevation of the walls of the hill fort, with the military camp reposing at its foot; while nearer the plain, lay the native city, embowered in luxuriant foliage, amongst whose leafy screens, rose here and there, a Hindoo temple, or a Mohammedan musjid, contrasting well with the cloudless sky, then glowing with the departing radiance of a tropic sun.

The bright green sward at our feet, was animated by crowds of natives, arrayed in all those brilliant colours in which the gala costume of Asiatics is so peculiarly rich. Many were on foot, others mounted on elephants and camels, whilst a few of the white-bearded elders had taken refuge with the women and children, in little clumsy two-wheeled bullock-carts, covered with gaudy draperies of scarlet and yellow cloth.

His Highness the Rao, was mounted on a large grey horse of the celebrated Katti-war breed, decorated with crimson housings, silken reins, and silver necklaces; but, as if all this bravery was insufficient for the notable occasion, the good steed's tail was dyed a most brilliant carmine colour, to complete the effect of a grand toilette; fortunately, the care bestowed by his Highness's grooms, seemed fully appreciated by the delighted spectators.

The Rao was attired in a superb green and gold turban, a Doputta, or body-cloth

of rich Kinkaub, a magnificent sword, bossed with Venetian gold, and a variety of valuable and dazzling ornaments. He was attended by his prime minister *Ambaram*, a very stout pleasant-looking personage; his Arab guards, and the principal men of the city; a company of Sepoys, under the command of an European officer, composing his guard of honour.

A space being cleared for the horses, the great exhibition of the day commenced; at a concerted signal, some dozen riders, very unequally mounted on huge Cutchee steeds, started together, the jockeys either holding each other's hands, or the corners of a handkerchief between them; this, for a certain period, enabled them to keep neck and neck, after which, à corps perdu, each strove lustily for precedence, kicking his bare heels against the horse's flanks, and rolling about in the well-stuffed saddles, with a system of jockeyship, as unlike running for the "Derby," as can be well imagined. The horses, untrained, and fed

to repletion, used considerable speed for the first hundred yards, but, after this, their best efforts degenerated to an exercise canter, interspersed with divers kicks and plunges, as the administration of the heel, or a rhinoceros horn-wand, advised them of their lazy backsliding. The riders wore their usual dress, consisting of huge turbans weighing some fifteen pounds each, with a waistband to match, in addition to which enormity, the saddles were composed of huge frames of wood and iron, covered with wadding, satin, and embroidered cloth, the stirrups and ornaments of silver, unpolished, and of the most clumsy workmanship.

At the conclusion of the races, rockets were thrown up; and some tastefully arranged, and very innocent-looking bunches of coloured paper, disposed on tall bamboos near the course, were fired. An enemy, however, lurked within; the papers were filled with highly sonorous crackers, and other combustible matter, and although

the lagging day-light diminished their effect to the spectators, the horses, camels, and elephants seemed considerably excited by the display, performing a variety of facetious antics, which kept their immediate neighbours continually on the alert, lest he, she, or it, might suffer from the natching of the surrounding quadrupeds.

One tall, white, wall-eyed, Cutchee horse, with a pink tail, and a peculiarly sinister expression of visage, did succeed, after a variety of evolutions, in putting his off hind leg, completely over a poor, humble, unassuming-looking, little, saffron-coloured poney, which had stood hanging its head, and blinking by the side of its tall companion, during the whole exhibibition; the catastrophe threatened to be serious, but, happily, the long-legged offender recovered himself with wonderful dexterity, and the apathetic-looking victim did not appear either surprised at, or grateful for his escape.

The fire-works having flashed, and

crackled, and showered their last, the picturesque-looking crowd dispersed, to enjoy the natching, and other diversions to be found in the houses of the richer portion of the populace; and every one who could afford to do so, illumined his dwelling with a floating light in a little oil saucer, or with English wax candles, if his means allowed it.

Returning to camp, the temples we observed were all brilliantly illuminated, the glancing lights casting out, in bold relief, the black stone idols, which seemed more than usually hideous, from the garlands and red pigment with which they had been recently decorated, in honour of the festival. Before each idol, burned a little chafing dish of frankincense, tended by an officiating Brahmin, the only animated object discernible, by the great blaze of light which so glaringly revealed the mysteries of the Adytum.

The Mohammedans, in courtesy to the Hindoos, had also observed the ceremony

of illumination; and as we passed their cemetery, hundreds of lights were burning amongst the tombs, half hidden by the foliage and brushwood which commonly shroud the resting-places of the followers of the prophet; whilst it might be seen, that under every sacred tree of the Hindoos, the little stone niche containing its rudely-sculptured idol, had also its garlands, its floating lights, and its share of scarlet pigment.

On the steps of one of the largest temples, which skirted the road side, was a Fakir, whose general appearance arrested attention. For a moment, the immoveable expression of his countenance and figure, induced me to believe him an idol, more particularly, as his position was that common to the representations of Budda; his legs folded, showing the soles of his feet, and his open hands placed on his lap, the back of one, resting flatly on the palm of the other. His body was smeared with red paint, his hair descended in matted

plaits to his waist, a huge necklace of Tulsi beads encircled his neck, and his eyes were fixed, in what he desired should seem an abstract contemplation of the deity.

This act of priestcraft is constantly practised during festivals, by these vicious impostors, who find the delusion of their fellow-men a very successful trade, and contrive to batten on the charity of the credulously pious. Astonished and misled by the apparent sanctity of this repulsive being, the poor people who pass the temple during the night, lay by his side, offerings of money, grain, &c., and although inwardly chuckling at his success, as the gifts of his admirers increase, he will retain perfect immobility until the neighbourhood is still, when he slinks back to the shelter of some miserable hut, to revel in filth, and abandon himself to the most disgusting licentiousness.

During the whole of the two last nights of the Dewalli, the constant discharge of

guns and rockets, render all attempt at rest fruitless, for the residents near native habitations; the only remaining consolation, is the remembrance, that the Hindoos have no winter festivals, and the feast of lights once concluded, no similar excitement will occur, until the Mohammedan fast of the Mohurrum, in the early spring.

The usual exhibitions of fireworks in India, are very mediocre, and ill-managed. The Chinese are, it is well known, adepts in their construction, but the artisans of the Celestial Empire set too high a value on these manufactures, to allow their general use on occasions of national rejoicing in India.

The want of skill, in the manufacture of fireworks, has its disadvantages increased by the bad taste of the exhibitors, who, ignorant of all the laws of contrast, either choose a moonlight night for their display, or run about, in real anxiety to develope the tortive graces of rockets and

catherine-wheels to the best advantage, by torch light.

Scarlet is the favourite colour for decorations of every kind; it is considered emblematic of pleasure and rejoicing; and on festal days, not only do little flags of this colour adorn every sacred tree, and float from the summit of every temple, but flowers which boast this favorite hue, are always selected in honor of the occasion.

The festivals of the East, are curious to the researcher into the manners of the ancient nations; and become interesting to the mere observer of the passing scene, from the circumstance of all restraint being banished from the manners of the people, and replaced by gaiety and good-feeling; at these seasons of national mirth, the oft seemingly timid, and gentle Hindoo, gives license to his genuine disposition, and laughs, sings, and adorns himself with garlands, as if he still inherited his native soil, in a happy state of constitutional freedom; it is at these periods, that

his character may perhaps be best discerned. It is the peculiar effect of joyous impulses, to banish suspicion from the mind, and, as they open the flood-gates of natural feeling, to remove from the countenance all that forced, and assumed expression, which self-interest and cunning suggest, as necessary to be adopted by men, who have inherited oppression as their birth-right, and can hope for no sympathy from those, whom they have only learnt to recognise as the masters of that soil, which their forefathers once trod, in freedom and security.

The native population of India, are peculiarly reserved in their intercourse with us, and are perpetually supporting a character foreign to their nature, and the result of the circumstances which surround them. Their prejudices of caste, prevent our having any intercourse with them of a social nature; and their religious ceremonies are less known from personal observation, than from the com-

munications of intelligent natives, which, after all we can acquire, little informs us on the real character, manners, and feelings of the people, when removed from the restraints of foreign espionage. It is therefore only on festive occasions, when the population of the towns seek the plains and neighbouring country, for the purpose of diversion, that they appear in a natural and unaffected character; and the result of the observation is, that the Hindoos are a peculiarly social people delighting in raillery, and easily excited to gaiety and mirth. An Asiatic crowd unites a greater variety of picturesque effects than any other in the world, and the most perfect harmony and good-nature prevail among its members. The older persons gossip, and exchange jests on each other, not deficient in wit; and the younger parties stroll about, with their arms encircling each other's necks, exchanging the most gentle and endearing epithets, as they laugh and chat, on what-

ever may be the object of attraction; unassailed by temptations to intemperance, its brutalizing effects never shade the pastimes of these inoffensive people; good-nature supplies the place of the constable's baton, and every one is merry himself, without seeking his advantages at the price of a neighbour's inconvenience. The scene is one of amiable courtesy; and if there is aught to regret, it is to be traced to the iniquity of the priesthood, who have demanded from these ignorant and credulous people, an observance of idolatrous ceremonies, whose antiquity, is sufficient to convince the people of their necessity and merit, and which, however degrading and demoralizing in their effects, must be regarded as the result of opinions and interests, formed by circumstances, in an early and barbarous stage of society; thus considered, the poor submissive believers in their efficacy, cannot be held responsible, in any rational opinion, for conformance with prescribed ordinances, however horrible

they may appear, viewed by the light of civilization, or compared with the simple ceremonies of a religion, which demands neither the blood of bulls nor of goats, but the free will offerings of a grateful nature.

Acquitted then, of all personal responsibility for the practical errors of their heathen creed, the Hindoos display, on festive occasions, many of the best feelings of social life, and entwine with their primitive observances, many poetic and graceful pleasures, which prove, that notwithstanding the ignorance in which the people are sunk, they still retain a taste for nature; and our sympathy with them, at least on this single point, should be an incentive to hope, that in our present times of general improvement, India, *morally* as well as commercially, may share the advantages of our liberated opinions, and that the press and the steam engine, may originate a change in our calculations of the capabilities, and character of the

Hindoos, which shall lay the corner-stone of reformation amongst them, banishing the idolatrous ceremonials of their festivals, and refining the expression of those natural and social graces, which even now, struggle forth amidst the huge mass of evil, shading the true spirit of these genial anniversaries.

CHAPTER VI.

THE HOOLI.

"It happened on a summer's holiday,
That to the greenwood sward he took his way."
CUMBERLAND.

THE Hindoos celebrate the burning of the Hooli, at the commencement of the vernal equinox, which has led, perhaps, to its comparison with the Hilaria of the Romans, instituted in honour of the goddess Cybele. In the east, this season is one of unmixed and boundless rejoicing; all restraint is cast aside, and both sexes indulge in every description of sportive

mirth. Masquerading processions are common; and the principal actors in the Carnival, disguise themselves as elephants, tigers, goddesses, or Rajahs, as fancy may decide, all dancing, singing, playing, and fencing vigorously together, without the least reference to assumed character. They delight also in playing personal tricks, similar to those common on our "All-fool's day," deceiving their simple-minded companions, with false messages and news. The evenings are devoted to natches, juggling, and fireworks; but it is considered most particularly jocose, to throw handsful of a red powder, called "Abir,"* over one another, as an imitation of vernal flowers. This, the most mischievous mix with alum and oil, and sprinkle on their neighbours' clothes, to the great injury of the said apparel. The lord of misrule alone reigns

* Cinnabar. A somewhat similar custom, according to Mr. Southey, exists in Portugal, on the Sunday and Monday preceding Lent, of throwing *water* over, and in the face of passengers.

paramount at the Hooli; all distinction of ranks is lost in its general license; a woman of respectability dare not leave her house, and even a European officer is not secure from a constrained participation in its frolics. The native officers of the regiments, erect a large tent at the extreme end of their lines, where they indulge in the pleasures of a Natch; not only Natch-girls, but boys, habited as such, frequently exhibit on these occasions, but it is not considered a very polished entertainment. The Sepoys consider it a point of etiquette, to invite their European officers; who, in their turn, always attend, and return with their white jackets plentifully sprinkled with red dust, as an evidence of the sportive pleasantry of their inviters. If an officer is peculiarly strict, or feared by the natives at other times, they now take an innocent revenge, an instance of which I remember to have occurred a short time since. An unpopular officer, being as usual invited to the Sepoys' Natch, which took place at a

tent, about a quarter of a mile from his Bungalow, he walked down to the lines at the usual time, late in the evening. The natives, it appeared, had concerted to plague him; for after being seated, and the usual wreath of mogree blossoms cast over his neck by the première danseuse of the evening, he soon found that the showers of red dust which assailed him, were momentarily becoming more and more stifling: accordingly, he watched his opportunity, and rushed from the tent, rejoicing at so easy an escape; but alas! his triumph was of short duration; at every turn, handfulls of red powder from unseen enemies saluted his eyes and mouth, and unable to avoid scores of tormentors, lying perdue at their posts, he arrived suffocated and breathless at his house, his face and hair plastered with red powder, and his whole figure bearing evidence to the zeal of the attackers. Crimson blossoms, or others of the most brilliant hues, are in great favour for personal decoration; and when nature pro-

vides none, sufficiently gaudy to suit their taste, the people place one blossom within the other, to produce the gay contrast they admire. The yellow Chumpa is placed within the crimson Oleander, and formed into wreaths, which are worn as necklaces, or looped in fantastic forms, over the many-coloured turbans. The natives never intersperse leaves with their garlands or bouquets, but strip them carefully from the flower-stems, using those blossoms only which are most fragrant or gaudy.

The festivities of the Hooli, continue for five, or more days, according to the wealth of those who celebrate its anniversary; but its established ceremonies, or the simple worship of earth and fire, occupy but one.

A spot of ground being selected, it is purified by a superficial layer of cow-dung and water, and the fire being placed on it, in an earthen vessel, rice, cocoa-nuts, flowers, seeds, and various offerings are made to it, with prayers and invocations;

this is called "Burning the Hooli." The earth seems worshipped, as the productive source of fruits, and flowers; and fire, as the vivifying origin of the genial warmth which ripens and perfects its various gifts. It is in the spirit of these ceremonies, that the Hooli appears to bear a curious resemblance to the Roman rites, as described by the poets of ancient days.

Parties of Natchwomen, jugglers, and other itinerant exhibitors, travel from station to station during the Hooli, and find it a very profitable season. The only theatrical attempt I remember, was from Bengal, and consisted of a *corps* dramatique of puppets (*Pootlees*), as they are called in India. The dolls had a theatre, suited to their size, and were well dressed, and admirably managed. One scene represented a native court, or Durbar, to which all the neighbouring Rajahs were supposed to make their salaams to the reigning prince, for whose decoration all the valuable "properties" had evidently been expended.

As each Rajah was introduced, with due observance of native etiquette, the stage manager would call out "è con hi? (whom have we here?) in a tone of such mingled surprise and admiration, as, considering the good gentleman's acquaintance with his actors, was exquisitely ludicrous; in another moment he solved the doubt, with "Oh! è Bundelcund Ke Rajah hi!" (he is the Rajah of Bundelcund.) And as his puppet finished his salaam, the exhibitor shuffled him off with a "Be quick! be quick!" which seemed sufficiently disrespectful to an acting prince, albeit a man of straw. Another scene represented a fencing match, in which, a native being killed, two out-cast natives drag off the dead body. Another, was intended as a satire upon our European troops, and represented a regiment on parade, all the officers being attired in cocked hats. This was ridiculous enough; but our native servants seemed most particularly delighted with the wit of this part of the entertain-

ment. The best point, however, by far, was the management of a little puppet, attired as a Natch-girl, accompanied by two puppets, who attended her movements with the Tom-tom and Siringa. The costume of the danseuse was perfect; her nose-rings, anklets, and bangles, tinkled as she moved, and the grace and exactness of her motions, were really admirable. Now, she would raise her arms, and, extending her veil far over her brows, gently turn slowly round; then, gradually bending, until her form almost reclined upon the ground, she would gracefully recover herself, and commence a rapid and coquettish movement, receding and advancing with her musicians, until, apparently wearied, she gracefully salaamed to the spectators. The whole was admirably governed; and I never saw even figures in the Italian fantoccini move more easily, or with more of what would seem, personal volition. This exhibition concluded, the proprietor got up a little monopologue of his own, and

in a hideous mask, with a saree and a staff, represented a withered crone; and, in the character of that garrulous personage, began to tell numerous facetious stories: of this, however, we soon wearied, his skill as a Raconteur being very mediocre. He soon reëntered as a tiger, and evidently intended to masquerade it through the whole animal world; but, the lights waxing dim, we dismissed our entertainer with a present, which he seemed duly to appreciate; for native payments are singularly scanty.

On the last day of the Hooli, bands of women, in their best attire, go round from house to house, in expectation of a trifling present; and it is not unusual for them to complement the donor with a shower of red dust, as a grateful offering; in short, mirth and frolic prevail: and, whatever this tricksome pair suggest, must be taken in good part, according to the spirit of this sunny holiday, which doubtless was originated as a commemoration of the genial spring time, when nature wears her bright-

est smiles, and the earth itself, with her bursting blossoms and jocund freshness, seems to suggest the idea of a blithe and universal carnival.

It is remarkable, to find a people so commonly sedate, as the Hindoos appear in their intercourse with strangers, capable of enjoying such "quips, and cranks, and wanton wiles," as mark the celebration of the Hooli. The Hindoo character is highly deserving minute study; for I know no other people who resemble them, or any known principles to which their peculiarities can be referred. The Hindoo has a most perfect and enviable command of countenance: whether in joy or sorow, he never betrays feelings he may desire to conceal; and the calm and serene appearance of his features, would induce an observer to believe him an apathetic being, whom the ordinary passions of our nature could not assail. Yet, how superficial is this judgment! See him in his temples, joining in some of the wild and startling

ceremonies of his idol worship, his eye kindling with enthusiasm, and his form writhing with excitement before the altars of his gods; see him at his festivals, garlanded with flowers, covered with unguents and perfumes, half mad with mirth, shouting and feasting in these joyous saturnalias; and then wonder, as we must, at the calm eye, and quiet aspect of the Hindoo, in his usual and public bearing.

European countenances are observed to retain the impression of highly-excited feeling long after the exciting cause has ceased; and it is by a triumph of practice, which men of the world well know the value of, that true expression may be supplied by a feigned one of the moment; but it would be found, even by a master in the art of physiognomical expression, an easier task to veil one passion, by the semblance of another, than to smooth the features into a cloudless mirror, of mere placidity. The Hindoo possesses this valuable power as the gift of nature, which, while it costs him

nothing, is available for both small and great occasions. Often have I been amused to see a servant, who has passed night after night, during the Hooli, in the maddest abandonment to mirth, return to his duty in the morning, with a countenance as sedate and unmoved, as if he had passed the hours in sleep, or in abstract meditation on the attributes of his gods.

It is this skilful ease, with which a Hindoo countenance baffles the closest scrutiny, that renders it so difficult to decide in a criminal case among them; the offender never fails to look so placidly innocent, that the inexperienced judge is often disposed to question the truth of evidence, which militates against the character of any individual, who displays so much conscientious self-possession.

Hindoo holidays interfere sadly with the labours of the working classes; for, however poor and needy the people may be, they still neglect their general vocation, and, closing their houses, and arraying

themselves in their best attire, hie away to the scene of festivity. Tailors, shoemakers, silversmiths, workers of tin, potters, basket makers, carpenters, carvers, and all the labouring population of a native town, are, on these days, only to be found without the walls, laughing, gossiping, and feasting together. Unrestrained by any dread of losing their customary employment, no amount of bribery will induce a workman to forego the gratifications of idleness and liberty on these appointed feasts, more particularly during the Hooli, which, like an Easter holiday, the very poorest find means to enjoy.

CHAPTER VI.

FORTUNE HUNTING IN INDIA.

"Riches and the life of man are as transient as drops of water upon a leaf of the lotus."

HINDOO STANZAS.

MANY of the members of our social community in India, are in the habit of considering a residence in the East as a state of exile; their only imaginable compensation for this irksome position, being the anticipated harvest of those pecuniary advantages, which shall entitle them to the future enjoyment of all the luxuries of their native land.

The time is past for fortune-making in

India; with the Mahratta war, ended the rapid promotion, the valuable plunder, and those rich divisions of jewels and prize-money, which sent men home, still in the vigour of life, to enjoy the dolce far niente, with a Lac of Rupees, and patronage in the "Direction."

The change which has taken place in Indian affairs, has not yet brought a corresponding and necessary change in the habits of our military society. It has not taught them the necessity of economising limited resources, or of discovering means for escaping that listless tedium, incident to a life void of exciting influences; yet it cannot escape the observation of any, who reflect upon the matter at all, that

> "These fantastic errors of our dream,
> Lead us to solid wrong."

Men still come to India, actuated by the single motive of becoming speedily their own masters, and retiring, if possible, on a handsome fortune, after a residence of, perhaps, five-and-thirty years, in a tropical

climate. The chances against this desired result are many and startling; and, supposing the advantage gained, the amount of benefit is sadly incommensurate with the sacrifices made for its attainment.

An officer in the Company's service, commonly commences his Indian career at the early age of eighteen; thus if we allow even "three-score years and ten," as the probable duration of his earthly pilgrimage, but a poor remnant of life remains, for the enjoyment of the halycon days to which he looks. While wasting the fine energies of a vigorous youth, in apathy towards the circumstances which surround him, and in vain aspirations for the future, the anxious fortune-hunter too probably forgets, that "ere the silver cord be loosed or the golden bowl be broken," nature must bend beneath infirmity, and that which most truly endears the remembrance of his country, must inevitably yield to the general law. The fond parent, whose heart has for weary years, yearned for the

voice of his beloved son ; the companion of his youth, who would gladly have rejoiced in his success, can wait for him no longer; the wanderer may indeed return, but the scenes of his youth look dark, and his spirit cannot then rejoice in the longed-for greeting of unchanged affection, or the well remembered smiles of once dear, and familiar faces. Meanwhile, the sojourner in the east, has himself acquired a weight of years, ill calculated to aid pleasurable enjoyment ; his views, all subtending towards the distances of life, have afforded little pleasure to the passing hours, have garnered few self satisfactions to gild his declining age; and the fruition of such hopes, too frequently bring little in their train, but querulous repining, unrelished self-indulgence, and a distaste for, and depreciation of the rational pleasures of existence.

This picture, dark as its features may appear, is, I think, not too highly coloured. That it possesses truth of delineation, must

be a subject of deep regret to all who feel, and think rightly, upon its self-induced deformities. The Indian service offers important advantages to all among its officers, who have the moral courage to cherish and cultivate their talents, rather than yield themselves inglorious prisoners to these witching temptations to idleness, extravagance, and dissipation, which unhappily assail them on their first arrival in the country. Some indeed there are, whose brilliancy of talent, and moral worth, render them well fitted to support the British name in India, whose well earned fame rests on a basis of their own establishment, and such will, I am sure, concur readily in the opinion, that a life passed in the east is far from being necessarily a blank, or otherwise than rife with matters of the highest interest.

The age at which young officers enter the Indian service, is that in which their characters are most pliant, while an unfinished education, leaves unconfirmed the

tastes and habits of the individual. The certainty of provision afforded by the military pay office, permits mental exertion to remain a matter of choice, and the newly attached ensign, but late a "whining school boy," suddenly finds himself in a position of authority, the owner of a sword and epaulette, with money at his command, and self-will his only monitor. Moreover, the youthful aspirant for military honors is soon surrounded by cringing natives, who, while they cheat and plunder, administer freely to his gratifications; and by companions of a similiar standing in the service, thoughtless as himself, and anxious to seduce him into their own vortex of reckless dissipation and expenditure. It is to this system, that many owe the breaking up of an originally fine and vigorous constitution; it does the work of the destroyer, far more certainly than any fatigues of military duty; and to this is India indebted for the libels heaped upon its climate, when it is spoken of, as

little better than a vast arena, its air impregnated with disease, its soil gaping for renewed victims.

It is easy to trace the proximate causes, producing many of the evils, common to a military life in India, and equally so, to imagine their extent. A brief sketch of the common temptations to which young candidates for distinction, either in the military, or even the civil service in India, are exposed, may partially lay bare the root of a great mischief, and ought certainly to excite regret, that such circumstances exist.

The young cadet, on his arrival in the country, discovers himself to be placed in a position at once novel and displeasing. The habits and tastes of those around him are at variance with any to which he has been accustomed. He meets no kind, familiar faces — none, who appear to sympathise in the feelings, which agitate him with fond regrets; and thus, with none to care for or advise him, he is thrown into

the society of strangers, and dependant on himself for counsel and resource. The immediate result of these uncongenial circumstances is, to create in the mind of the young cadet, unbounded disgust for the climate and natives of India, and to induce false opinions, highly prejudicial to his future respectability.

Servants who make the robbery of *griffims* their profession, claim the newly arrived cadet as their natural prey ; Parsee traders, scarcely more honest, impose on him bad goods and high charges ; at length deeply involved for mere articles of boyish fancy, the poor lad finds himself in a state of grievous embarrassment, consequent on an expenditure disproportioned to his means. Unable to meet the demands of traders, whose wares have tempted his inexperience, the sufferer gives notes of hand for horses, sadlery, perfumes, and knicknacks, consenting to pay usurious interests on his creditor's accounts, as the sole means of extrication from their

importunate demands. This done, the poor victim feels happy and relieved, little imagining, that he has laid the sure foundation for a pile of difficulties, which, if not altogether insurmountable, will tend for many weary years, to oppress him with the harrassing sense of pecuniary obligation.

On joining his regiment as an ensign, the expenses of his mess, and many inducements to extravagance, involve the young officer yet more deeply; for it may be observed, there is unhappily no due gradation in the expenses of Indian military life, agreeing with the differences of rank and pay.

The ensign keeps his hunters, and drinks his beer, on the same scale with the captain of his company, and his finances suffer accordingly. Immersed in difficulty, the hapless subaltern too often seeks his only resources, in conviviality and sport; hog-hunting becomes the serious business of his life; and as his

embarrassments increase, and the hope of revisiting his native land diminishes with each succeeding year, existence becomes doubly a dream, and its worthiest desires graduate into visionary fallacies, which daily become less animating, less productive of moral restraint.

After thus passing the early years of his life, in the acquirement of habits much disproportioned to his means, the subaltern in India seldom cares to allow an idea of future provision to abridge his pleasures, until he finds himself a Brevet Captain.

Being considered *eligible* at this period, he probably marries; and by the growth of olive branches round his table, finds his expenses considerably increased.

His wife requires a carriage, horses, and Ayahs. Mercers' bills draw deeply upon his allowances; his subscription to the military fund is more than doubled, and as years pass on, his children are sent to England in search of health and educa-

tion. Little now is to be saved; and "he that hath his quiver full of them," is often constrained to struggle on, against failing health and increasing age, for the sake of the sons and daughters, thus torn from him in their infancy. Should strength of constitution befriend the Eastern sojourner, he must gradually rise through the several grades of the service; until, as a nervous, querulous old Colonel, he may command a station by right of his seniority; or may betake the tattered remnants of his existence, to be patched up for a few years longer, by the congenial climate of his fatherland; where the "old Indian," shivers in the wholesome breeze, clings to his eastern habits, finds himself a century behind the world—seeks in vain for a companion who remembers the friends of his youth; and so sinks into the grave, his death scarcely noticed, but by the gratulations of struggling juniors, who, as they receive news of "another line step," count over their chances of promotion, and re-

joice, that old "so and so," is gone at last.

On the other hand, the Indian Obituary points its warning evidence, by the recorded fate of many, self-sacrificed to the "one year too long in India."*

The very questionable expediency of desiring, at three-score years, to increase a provision for the future, has been long and frequently attested; but the moral to be adduced from the fact, that

——"At such years
Death gives short notice,"

is seldom practically applied to individual cases; neither does the truth yet appear to be accepted, that a green old age is a better possession than a lac of rupees, if accompanied by blighted feelings, or a constitution worn full of chinks.

As an honorable provision for the sons of our British gentry, the Indian service would increase ten fold in value, if the temptations which it offers to indolence and dissipation, were removed.

Observation suggests, that the origin of much which possesses a very mischievous tendency, may be explained by the consideration of a few facts, all bearing an intimate connection with each other. Among these may be particularly noticed, the youth and inexperience of Cadets, at the time of their entering the service; the temptations and crafty impositions to which they are exposed, on first arriving in the country; the disproportionate expenditure of the various grades in the service, and the habits of extravagance, induced and cherished, by an indolence arising from the supposed absence of subjects possessing sufficient interest to offer a strong mental stimulus.

A very important remedy for the existence of the *first* of the above-mentioned evils, would be found in the establishment of Barracks, and a mess for Cadets arriving at the Presidency, which should be placed under the superintendence of a respectable and efficient officer; this advan-

tage would at least serve to protect an inexperienced lad from being victimised on his first arrival, both by roguish servants, and professional thieves.

In defiance of police regulations and corrections, there still exists in Bombay, a clique of dexterous plunderers, whose principal haunt is on the particular portion of the Esplanade, where are pitched the unguarded tents of these unfortunate Cadets; and the vagabonds, by watching an opportunity, skilfully remove the portable possessions of the unwary inmates.*

Not less systematic, are the robberies committed by servants, who really seem to possess a patent for the ingenious devices by which they garner and apply the floating capital of a hapless *griffin*. As I have

* This is frequently compassed during the night, by casting long hooks into the tents, which fasten on the loose articles, and are readily withdrawn. An individual placing his apparel on the chair beside his bed, when retiring to rest, has frequently found them stolen during the night.

before observed, on the first landing of a Cadet on the Bundah, these fellows, who are usually Mohammedans, run along by the side of the Palankeen, into which the new arrival has with difficulty packed himself, calling out in mutilated English, which is however music, to the ears of the half distracted occupant: "I master's servant—I plenty gentlemen's servant—I got good character—I get master every thing." The half-stunned Cadet, delighted to find, in the unpromising garb of a cotton Ankrika and Turban, any creature who can understand his wants, engages the most eager of the group forthwith; and the rascal runs off to the Thieves' Bazaar, to "get master every thing," chairs, table, tent, bed, and the usual etceteras for a bachelor's housekeeping. After a ruinous sojourn in Bombay, the Cadet is posted to a regiment; and when on board a cotton boat, about to weigh anchor, and proceed to a far distant station, his single-minded Mohammedan servant stands before his

master, and with folded arms, and down-cast eyes, addresses his employer thus: "Very sorry not go with master, but poor mother very sick; suppose stay in Bombay just now—will come very quick after master—suppose poor mother get well." The helpless Cadet proceeds, and the attendant canoe bears away his accomplished "help," to make merry with his companions, and lie in wait for fresh victims.

It is to be regretted, that some means are not enforced to check the freedom with which Borahs, horse-dealers, and other traders, invite young men to incur heavy debts, which must eventually betray them into difficulty and disgrace; or that some arrangement is not made to protect young officers, freshly arrived in India, from the dangerous artifices of wily natives, and afford them the advantages of a home and respectable attendance, as strangers in a foreign land; the absence of which comforts, I have heard many feelingly deplore,

as a primary cause of much of the embarrassment of their subsequent career.

The disproportionate expenditure of Subalterns in the Indian service, is the offspring of custom and opinion. It is, consequently, only by an alteration in both, that the evil can be checked. The individuals who compose our Anglo-Indian society, are placed by circumstances, in a position essentially artificial. None of the usual excitements of a busy world offer an escape from the tedium and monotony incident to any portion of life passed in an out-station cantonment, far more wearisome than can be well imagined, even by a sojourner in that microcosm of dulness, yclept, "Country Quarters." The circle of Indian amusements is circumscribed indeed; and such as exist, are expensive to command. Hunting, and the turf, appropriate the energies of the aggregate of military men; and the means and appliances required for these exciting objects, but ill

suit the half Batta allowances, of a subaltern in a marching regiment.

> "Yet still in sooth, they tempt each youth
> To forget his failing purse,
> To laugh at his debts, and the bailiff's threats,
> While his pay grows worse and worse."

The inferred absurdity, of expecting men on the receipt of 180 rupees a month, to support the style of a scion of nobility, or to live at the same rate as officers of high standing, requires no comment. Facts, however, prove this to be a very constant habit among individuals, who are known to be unpossessed of any other means, than such as are drawn from the military pay-office. In the olden times, while the "Gold Mohur" trees of Hindostan still put forth fresh blossoms, encouraging the searchers after wealth, to hope that a lac of rupees would eventually prove a commensurate return for a few shades of oriental tinting, the communication between India and Europe, was so limited, and so tedious,

that men were happy to avail themselves of any sources of occupation or excitement; and the most readily attainable, were those of hunting, racing, brandy pani drinking, and cheroots. In those days, marriages were uncommon in the Indian army; many stations were altogether without female society; and if an officer by chance became a Benedict, the lady of his choice was probably an Indo-Briton, or a person of inferior birth, uncompaniable and illiterate.

An important change is gaining ground, which will doubtless exert its improving influences on the British, as well as the native community of India. Novel ideas will be constantly afforded; and resources of a useful nature, will replace such as are merely frivolous, or injudiciously expensive. The lower steps in the great ladder of improvement, are secured by the capabilities of steam navigation. Bombay is now a mart for every convenience and luxury required by European residents; professors of the fine arts are beginning to establish them-

selves in the island, and the resources of literature may be commanded by means of excellent libraries, supported at most of the Mofussil stations.

One of the greatest errors we commit in India, is that of sacrificing all interest in the present, to the sole enjoyment of a future return to the homes of our native land; committing, meanwhile, the most grievous injustice to these hopes, by living at a rate of expenditure, which can afford but little opportunity for garnering the pecuniary independence necessary to secure the desired object.

An officer in the Company's service, seldom retires at the expiration of twenty-two years; and even supposing that unusual good fortune permits him this advantage, the best period of his existence will yet have been passed in India. Happily may the time have flown, should his energies have been well engaged; but if otherwise, alas! the remembrance of it forms but a tissue of disappointed hopes, wasted talents,

and pecuniary embarrassment. Knowing nothing of the country, but in its reputation for sport, and nothing of the natives, but in the character of servants, money-lenders, and traders, these hapless individuals speak in terms of severity of the whole population of India, of whose customs, manners, opinions, rights, and peculiarities, they are totally ignorant.

An indolent mind will find all barren; yet much remains in India, which as hidden treasure, awaits research alone, most richly to reward diligent investigation. It is perfectly erroneous to suppose, that military duty in the East must inevitably prove a dull routine, requiring neither energetic endeavour, or active mental exercise, to achieve the distinction which all must secretly desire. Regimental promotion is, indeed, but a simple waiting for events, the offspring of particular chances; but without reference to the immediate satisfactions which accompany the stirring interests of original research and active

enterprize, there is yet held out, an offer of additional reward in the good allowances of many staff and other lucrative appointments, to which officers are usually appointed, who evidence particular zeal and talent, in matters of general and important interest. Individual merit is now a better recommendation than extensive patronage; and indolence can no longer claim the apology of inutility for its pernicious self-indulgence.

Reasons exist no longer, by which an Indian sojourner can urge his right to despond as an *exile* from his country, since reforming time has deprived that word of its darkest meanings. Though on a foreign soil, the interests of his native land, and her political advancement, may now employ the constant attention of the temporary absentee, while that ardency of expectation, excited by just and benevolent views connected with the country in which so large a portion of his life must pass, will elevate the tone of his pursuits and pleasures, and originate a relish for

research, into whatever objects may tend most to advance the general good, according to the particular condition of the people, whose improvement forms the purest aim of the true philanthropist.

Thus, while the amusements necessary for health, are enjoyed as subordinate to higher objects, the resident in the East can no longer feel himself an exiled, or a useless man; and although he may not possess wealth, garnered at the expense of integrity, he will feel that neither his talents or energies are wasting, that his heart is neither hardened by dissipation, or his mind subdued by sloth; but on the contrary, the present is cheered by useful occupation, tending to advance the good fame of the individual in his chosen career, and secure for him a self-satisfaction, which will shed hope and contentment on his declining years.

It has been remarked, that every individual in the Company's service, has power to strengthen the respect of the

natives of India for the British character. This is strictly true, throughout every grade of the service. The authority which implies the force of rule, originates in the government of British India; but the influence which must continue an ascendancy over the minds of its people, requires for its support, the reasonable approval of that people.

Burke has remarked, that the influence of France as a republic was equal to a war; the strongest observation on the power of influence, as distinct from authority, which could readily be adduced.

The influence of Britain should be equally potent; and it becomes the duty of every British officer, as the delegate of his country, to strengthen her dominion over the minds and opinions of the natives of the East, by a diligent practice of her moral and political virtues. Rendered loquacious by circumstances, the Sepoys, Peons, and native servants of every

description, who surround European officers, have a propensity to recapitulate their private acts and expressions to each other; until by degrees, the information reaches the ears of a superior class, and leads the native gentry to form opinions of general character from individual examples, which are, unhappily, sometimes such as tend to create repugnance and disaffection.

Prompt as the people are to depreciate manners which are not only opposed to their own prejudices, but criminal according to all codes of humanity and justice, they are at all times ready to cede approval to public and private virtue; personal courage, wise administration of public affairs, equity in our dealings, and courteousness in our bearing towards themselves, have ever awakened feelings of the highest respect and admiration among the people; and the same men who once nailed on a bastion of their city the hand of an European officer, who boasted that it had

never been raised to return the salute of a native, would speak with tears of gratitude, of the virtues of an Elphinstone, a Malcolm, or a Munro, and of many, too,

———————"By fortune's aid who rose,
Ev'n from the basest grade through circumstance and
foes."

The British officer who feels, amid the privations of a foreign clime, how dear to him is still the glory and interest of his father-land, would secure the wisest solace for years of absence, by an endeavour to cultivate the respect and affection of the people around him, and advance, by his own example and influence, the noble scheme of Asiatic civilization.

To engraft liberal views on ancient prejudice, it is necessary to study the character of the people to be improved, and to become acquainted with the true spirit of their institutions and observances.

These enquiries, as applied to India, are redolent in interest. "Science alike, and

sage Philosophy," must lend their aid in the research; the antique cave must be sought; the fractured inscription, albeit but dimly visible, be carefully decyphered; and the character of that wisdom be duly weighed, whose record is stamped in granite scroll of ancient character, or on the crumbling columns of a forgotten age.

The mythology of the Hindoos, rich in all the subtleties of poetic allegory; the costly temples and richly-sculptured palaces; the stores of learning yet encased in the casket of Sanskrit literature, offer a high reward to the industrious researcher into the history of an ancient people; and the pen and pencil may with equal advantage be devoted to a work, which, however laborious in its commencement, will richly repay the most sedulous investigation. Learned orientalists, who have made these interesting studies the business of a life, "hoping to raise, or benefit mankind," are rapidly diminishing, and little is yet

known of the most ancient nation in the world.

Time, and partial innovation, has weakened the almost unimaginable influence of the Brahminical priesthood, and the natives of India will more readily communicate the information they possess. A mere research into ancient manners may not afford much of a useful nature, if undirected by philosophic views; yet is in some degree necessary, to develope the origin of prejudices, and consequently to suggest the most ready means for their removal.

Every encouragement is offered by the local government, to literary and scientific research; and branch societies now exist in Bombay, having for their immediate object, the collection of geographical, and generally statistical information, on the natural resources of Western India.

CHAPTER VIII.

SCENES IN THE DECKAN.

" Rich in the brilliance of the balmiest light,
These scenes repose."

POLWHELE.

THE cantonment of Poonah, justly considered the finest station in Western India, forms a delightful resort during the rainy season, when it becomes a nucleus of gaiety and attraction to its Bombay visitors. On leaving the Presidency, a Bunder boat is required to convey the traveller across the Bay, to the Panwell river; a very lovely sail, the water being studded with little islets, on which innumerable

huts peep forth among the tufted trees, the whole enlivened with groups of natives, whose dark skins and richly-coloured garments blend exquisitely with the sapphire glow of the scene around. Panwell itself, is a small, hot, and dirty village, including a Bungalow kept by a Parsee, for the shelter certainly, rather than for the *accommodation* of travellers. Government Bungalows, which afford the single convenience of rendering the carriage of tents unnecessary, have been erected at distances of ten miles, between Panwell and Poonah, on the splendid road over the Ghauts, cut under the direction of Sir John Malcolm, when Governor of Bombay; but the dirt of these edifices is really disgraceful, and their equipments miserably incomplete. The furniture consists, simply, of a rude teak wood table, three chairs, and a marching cot, commonly abundantly supplied by many specimens of that dusky creature, by the Americans delicately termed Chintzes: while a Goja and pie dish sup-

ply the absence of a basin and ewer; and the beams of the roof tremble from the devastations of innumerable white ants, who, with the bats, love to dwell together, upon the high places. If the traveller happen to be neither a poet or a painter, his sole resource, during the hours passed in these solitary and comfortless retreats, is found in turning over the traveller's book, and noting the arrival and departure of those who, like himself, have been immured in a similar position;* or in availing himself of the talents of the chief cuisinier of the neighbouring Parsee's Bobajee Khana;† members of this speculative class never omitting any opportunity

* Some individuals indulge in facetious remarks, recorded for the amusement of fresh comers. At Chôke a remark was entered, that —— found the Bungalow in a most filthy condition, the floor being literally covered with cow dung. It is scarcely necessary to remark, that this forms the flooring of all houses in India which are not chumamed.

† Literally, the Hall of Cooks.

of placing themselves in positions where aught is to be garnered. A great improvement has lately taken place in the mode of travelling on this road. The old system allowed only the alternative of horseback or of dâk, both possessing inconveniences to many. But a roomy and comfortable phaeton may be now engaged, which travels speedily, and is well driven. From Panwell the route lies through Chôke, a dirty, desolate place, to Candala, justly esteemed the Montpelier of Western India. From the back of the traveller's Bungalow, (which is rather better than its brethren on the road,) a superb view of the Ghauts arrests the traveller's wondering admiration. And here I would observe, how few among persons who have witnessed splendid natural effects, but must have deplored the inability of the pen to afford an adequate idea of that which is seen, to the mind of the absent. The description of such natural and varied grandeur can be limited only by each indi-

vidual's power of graphic portraiture, all however, far below the truth, and weak to the imagination of the poetic reader. From the site I contemplated the glorious scenes of this magnificent Ghaut,—mountain above mountain rose, their bare and ragged summits towering among the fleecy clouds; while half way down, in richest beauty, thick woods of brightest green were garlanded with blossoming creepers of every hue, with here and there, masses of dark rock jutting from among the brilliant verdure. Above, below, dense clouds and fleecy vapours swept across the bold scarp of the mountain side; while on those spots, illumined by the sapphire glow of the bright morning's sun, a mountain torrent foamed and sparkled down its self-worn channel, sometimes hidden by the clustering foliage, then rushing with sudden violence over the broken rocks which partially intercepted its downward course, until it murmuringly stole away, among the rich culture and quiet scenes of the

still valley, which lay sprinkled with sheltered hamlets at the mountain's base.

The temple caves of Carlee are situated near Candala; and strange, beautiful, and wondrous as they are, they have been too well, and too frequently remarked upon, to require further description. Wherever Nature has been most prolific, wherever hill, and rock, and stream, and flower, are most grand, most beautiful, most bright, there the richly crusted sculptures of a Pagan temple may be ever seen, and religion beckons willing votaries to its shrine. The Caves of Elephanta lie half shrouded on an island, whose position is, perhaps, the loveliest in the world. The Caves of Kanaree enrich the shaded labyrinths and flowery jungles of Salsette. The Temples of Aboo and Girnar, look on scenes where imagination herself is weak in picturing their beauties; and from the dark Caves of Carlee, the early worshipper of its gigantic idols, might have looked around upon a scene, which, in later days, falling

upon the stranger's eye, excites his wondering surprise, that man should seek for other agents than the scene around, to raise his thoughts to Heaven.

The vast solitudes of Candala abound with wild beasts of various descriptions; and royal tigers have been known to pay very unceremonious visits to the traveller's Bungalow. A gentleman, but a short time since, was awaiting the arrival of a friend, whom he expected immediately from Bombay; at midnight, imagining he heard the Hummalls' measured tread, as they would ascend the road leading to the entrance, he sallied forth, impatient for the greeting. No friendly face was there; but as the pale moonbeams shone across his path, the stately form of a royal tiger, stood forth in shadowy but bold relief, three feet from where he stood. Confronted thus with startling suddenness, each gazed for a moment steadfastly on the other, when the stately brute, turning slowly round, descended with the same

heavy tread, which, from the enjoyment of quiet slumber, had brought forth to this position of peril, his misjudging and half-scared vis-à-vis.

From Candala, the next station is Girgaum, an uninteresting place, from which the traveller is anxious to escape to Panowlee, and thence to Poonah, when a distance is completed of seventy-five miles, on a superb road, and through the most beautiful scenery in Western India. The most advantageous period for travelling on this road is certainly during the rainy season; the splendid effects of light and shade being heightened by the changing hues of the thunder-charged clouds; and the numerous cataracts, falling over the bold scarps of the towering Ghauts, being swelled by the force of the mountain torrents.

Poonah is an excellent and delightful cantonment. The roads about it are good, the society hospitable and gay. An amateur theatre affords a very material

source of amusement in the station, and is admirably supported. The building is pretty and well lighted, the stage small, but the scenery and drop curtain excellently painted, good limners being usually found among the European soldiery. A good orchestra, occupied by the best military band, completes the arrangements; and the whole is a fertile source of general entertainment. Several officers of the 40th regiment, some short time since stationed at Poonah, were admirable as amateurs of the histrionic art; and I have seen the School for Scandal, the Rivals, the Critic, and many of our best English comedies, performed in a manner which would have been creditable to actors by profession. These amusements are commonly terminated by a supper, which the amateurs either enjoy in character on the stage, or adjourn to do full justice to, at the neighbouring bungalow of some hospitable patron of the comic muse. On the occasions of a dress rehearsal, the soldiers and their families have an entrée, and as is frequently

remarked of the galleries of an English theatre, this rank of society appear almost more capable of appreciating a witty saying, or a moral sentiment, than their wealthier and more sophisticated neighbours. Fancy balls, are also a source of considerable amusement to the social circle, as well as of pecuniary advantage to the Borah and Dirzi tribes, the first being persecuted by applications for tinsel and coloured satins, and the latter puzzled to clip and fit such garments, as offer a task quite unrivalled in difficulty, by any of their common avocations. To fashion the grey coat of Napoleon, or adorn the ribaned hat of Massaniello, are comparatively simple duties; but the full dress uniform of an Austrian officer, the picturesque costume of a Swiss peasant, or the drooping beaver of Robin Hood, plunges them in dismay. The effect of an Indian ball-room, on these particular festivities, really affords a proof of very considerable genius, in producing results so admirable,

out of the very scanty means, commonly alone procurable, in the Borah stores of a native bazaar.

The desired costume is usually well arranged, and the groups which comprize the festive scene are varied, striking, and well adorned. Sultans, Sultanas, Greeks, Neapolitans, Spanish Cavaliers, throng the assembly; while here, a Dr. Syntax may be seen in search of the picturesque, or a court dress of the last century will win admiration, on the superior gracefulness of a modern antique. The gentlemen of Poonah find their principal amusement in hog-hunting pic-nics, which until a late order, were usually enjoyed on consecutive Thursdays. In a tropical climate, hog-hunting is productive of almost necessary excitement, and is a most agreeable variety to the monotomy of camp existence. The dawn of an appointed day sees the ardent sportsman far on his way to the distant spot, where horse and friends await him. Here the tents are pitched, and the flutter-

ing flag bears the wild boar for its ensign. After capital riding, over a fine and lovely country, the sport once past, spears lost and won, the wild boars dragged in triumph home, the beaters wearied and exhausted, reposing on the ground, the party, "all good fellows," adjourn to their encampment, open their stores of welcome and required refreshment, then

"Take the cup,
And drain it up,
To snaffle, spur and spear."

The evening sees them on their *tats*, returning into camp, all with renewed health, good spirits, and good-feeling. The Deckan generally, abounds with game; but the country is dangerous, and difficult to ride over, a circumstance, however, which seems rather to encrease than diminish the sportsman's zeal. From the good riding required, and personal peril incurred by a hog-hunter, this sport deservedly ranks higher than any other.

In a moral point of view, it likewise does so. The vigour and fierceness of the animal renders the contest a very equal one. The wild boar strikes fear into his opponent, and even the horse, "who paweth in the valley and rejoiceth in his strength," trembles before him. Again, hog-hunting promotes good fellowship, without incurring the gross vice of intemperance. An intemperate man cannot be a good sportsman; thê effect of intemperance is to relax the fibres, to weaken the energies, to exhaust the system. The necessities of hog-hunting call all a man's mental and bodily powers into full action; or, in the continual danger of the sport, his life would be the sacrifice. The Ghauts which the wild hog usually infest, are of immense height, and in parts nearly perpendicular, formed of ledges of scarp rock, down which the sportsman must not hesitate to push his steed, urging the noble Arab to spring from point to point, heedless of all save the object of his speed;

then, and not till then, when the spear of the hunter is dyed in the blood of the grim grey boar, and his steed, with streaming sides and expanded nostril, is panting by his side, does he review the ground he has passed in moments of excitement, and the Nimrod of the day trembles at the danger he so late defied.

The Governor's bungalow at Dapourie, is a beautiful residence, situated but a mile or two from Poonah. It has the advantage of possessing a good botanical garden, filled with the choicest Oriental and exotic plants. The soil of the Deckan, is remarkable, I think, for its congeniality to the growth of geraniums, the scarlet description flourishing most luxuriantly in the gardens of the cantonment.

The Poonah Auxiliary Horse, as a body of irregular cavalry, form a well-drilled and valuable local corps. They carry a spear, instead of the more common matchlock, and wear the Mahratta Puggree, or Turban, secured below the chin. This

dress is easy, yet has an air of military compactness about it, which accords well with the handsome figures, and soldierlike bearing of the wearers.

Much has been said for and against the policy of organizing local and provincial corps, and of draining the regular army for European officers to command them. They have been stated to prove of little aid in times of general warfare, inasmuch as their removal on active service, may be considered as a breach of faith. This is a subject more suited to a military, than a woman's pen; I would only remark, as the result of personal observation, that the services of a portion of the Poonah irregulars, long stationed in Cutch, have been found highly valuable; and that at present, one detachment from Poonah, are actively employed with the advanced army in our north-western frontier, and another, with the reserve force of the Indus in Lower Sindh. They have been ever found to be a subordinate, intelligent, useful class of men;

and while available for foreign duty, as their present position proves, are eminently valuable in times of local excitement, from their geographical knowledge of a province, and the resources, habits, and retreats of its inhabitants.

The natives of Poonah mould curious little toys of clay, descriptive of Hindoo castes, and the several employments of the people. The groups are characteristic, of good proportions, and well coloured ; and the figures being suitably attired, afford an admirable idea of native costume, and general appearance. The Palankeen and its Hindostan bearers—the women grinding the corn for family consumption—the Ayah nursing a European infant—and the Borah displaying his varied goods, are among the best specimens of the plastic art, as it is practised by the Poonah artists. Baskets and screens, woven of the sweet scented Kuskos grass, and adorned with gold and crimson velvet, and the emerald beetle-wing, are also pretty articles

